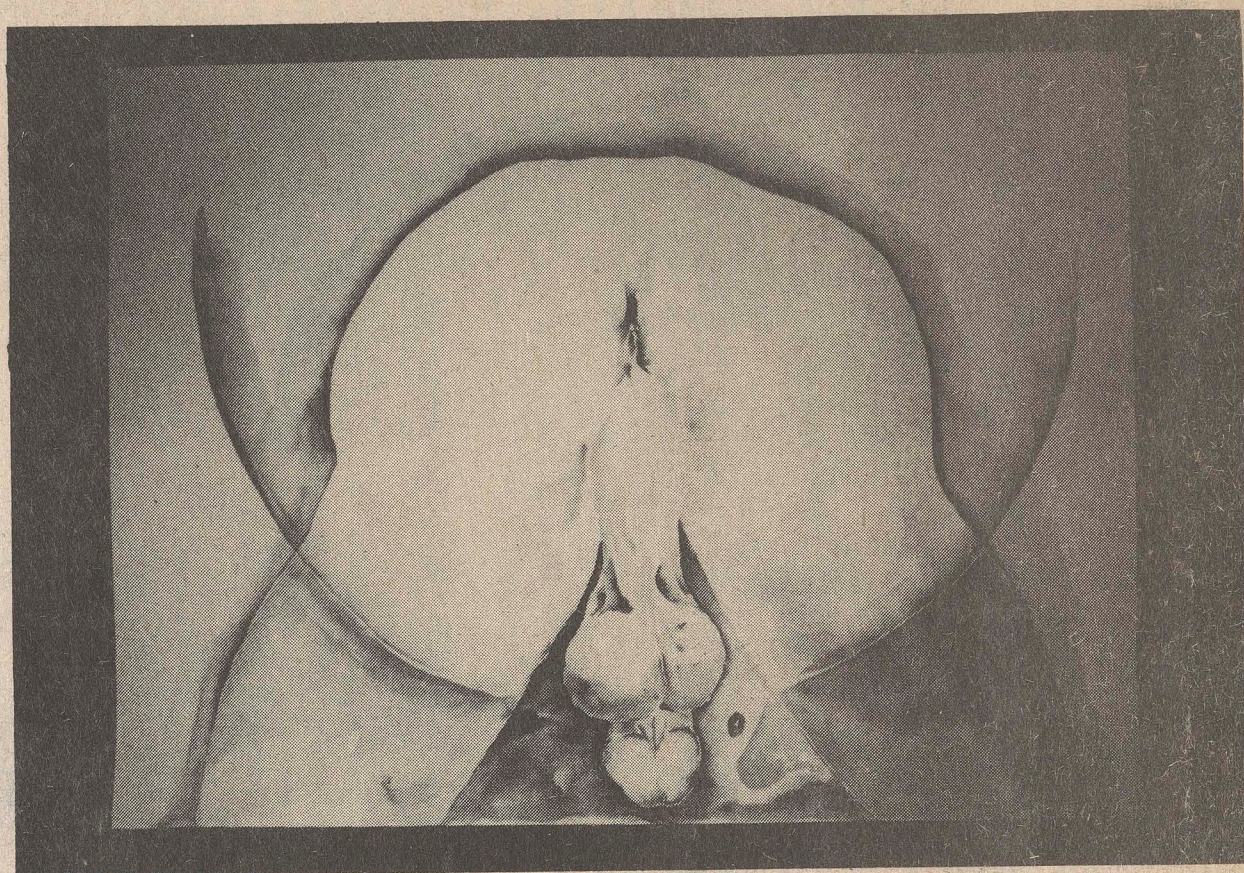


FALL 1978 DOUBLE ISSUE



**Verses included in HOWL reading Boston City Hall
April 20, 1978**

... when the blonde & naked angel came to pierce them with a sword
who were busted for eye-contact in the Boston Public Library men's room
when a handsome youthful policeman flashed his irish loins & winning
smile over a urinal, & then exhibited his badge
who were arrested for teenage porn ring headlines in Boston Globe when
the octegenarian bachelor D.A. got hysterical screaming through his
iron mask at election time
lusting lusting lusting for votes, for heterosexual ballotboxes' votes,
who arrested bus driving fairies & put them in an iron cage, & yelled at
little homeless boys
& made them sing and dance in tears to please the plainclothes courts
& fink on lonesome middleaged bearded lovers kneeling to worship kid
Dionysus in Revere
Lord of orgies, ecstasies, poolhalls & pinball machines set up by Syndicate
near the old Amusement park freakshow fronting Atlantic Ocean. . . .
Allen Ginsberg

ONE DOLLAR

Fag Rag

#23/24



Fag Rag

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Freddie Greenfield

Shannon Austin

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MAYA

Ted Clausen

clover and the beads of sweat

Fag Rag 23/24

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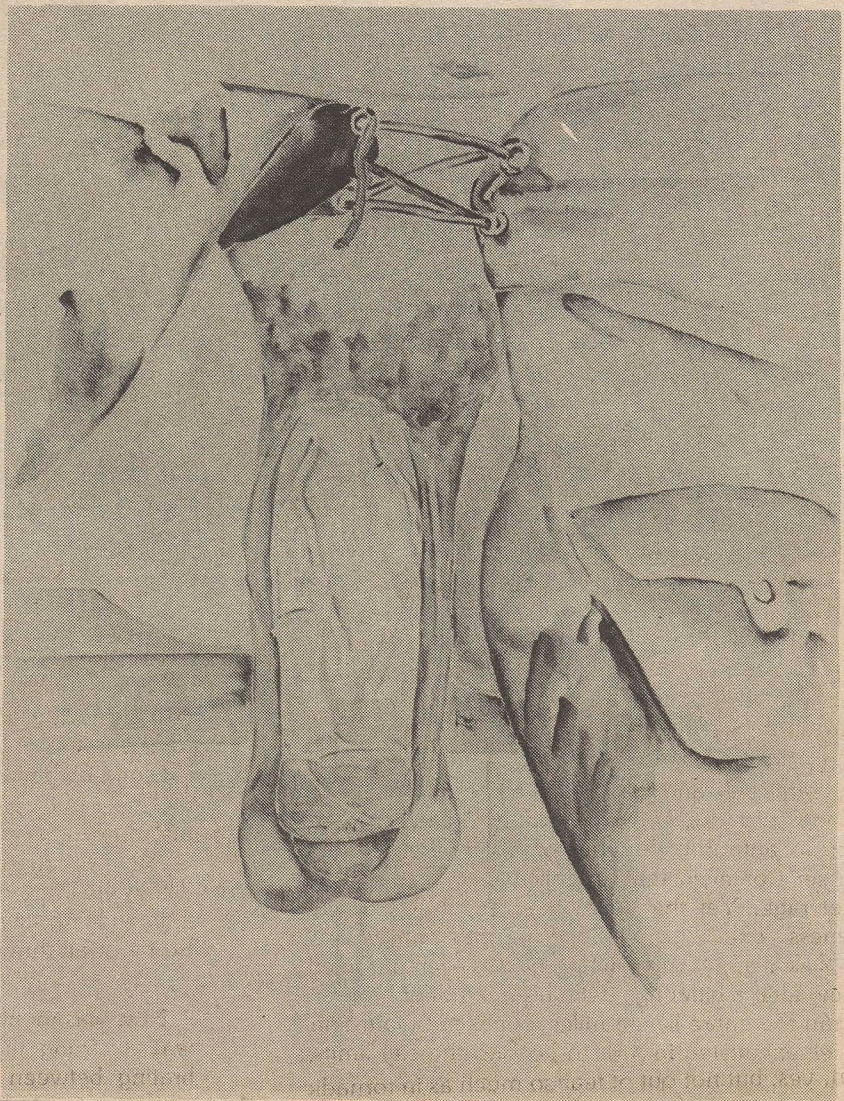
ISSN 0046-3167-001697

A CALL TO GAY AND FAGGOT ARTISTS:

The Fag Rag archives are running thin. We want to put your work in print. It is important to us to have a visual content to complement what is in words. Submit!!
SUBMIT!

"O, PHALLOS!"

Oversized male genitalia will be the subject of works in a one-man show by Nuki at the Leslie-Lohman Gallery, 485 Broome St., (SOHO), NYC 10013. The show will start September 5 and run, Tuesdays through Saturdays, 1-5 p.m., through Sept. 30.



Cover, back and above —
3 watercolors by NUKI — 1978

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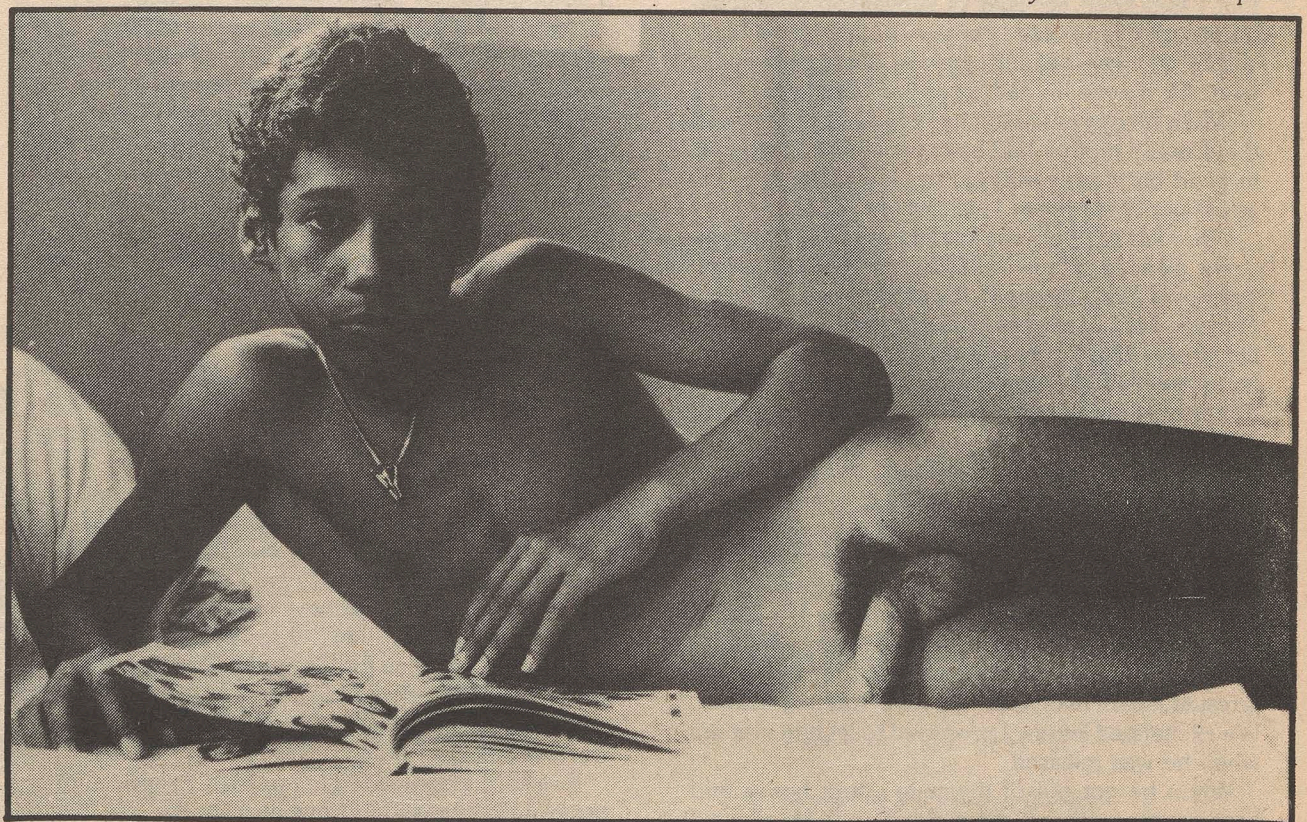
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The Sling of David

by Will Inman

Photo by Michael Thompson



The boy had seen us thru the keyhole. Had crept into the front hall and up the wide old stairs that turned rectangularly to the small landing between my bedroom and kitchen. Had listened, peeped, watched.

"I seen what y'all was doin'."

I stared at him noncommittally. Perhaps a trace of smile worked in one corner of my mouth.

"Is that supposed to make you and me better friends?" I asked.

He stared glumly at me. The trace of triumph on his dark face had vanished abruptly. I didn't know exactly what was going on between us, but I intuitively knew not to give in to panic or even to let him know that I was surprised or very concerned.

"You want to do sompn wit' me?" Behind the angry challenge of his naked offer, shone an almost desperate vulnerability, longing.

Now I understood everything in a flash. I thought. I had been kind to him, had spoken to him as an equal, had shown him a very real physical affection.

Compared with any closeness to members of his own family, his exchanges with me, though innocuous enough, were powerful. His mother was an amazon of a woman, forceful, loud, fearless. To him, as to all her five children, she was a bullying giantess. The boy was small but proud. His father, a locksmith, had only one leg. As dour as his wife but about two-thirds her size, he had had to match with wit, sarcasm, and pride what she gave out in thunder and threats. David had modelled his resistance to authority — whether his mother's or his teacher's or even that of police — on his father's quiet rage. Yet the boy lacked the man's articulateness: often, he would draw into himself and simply leaves a scene in which he had been affronted. Once, after a bitter fight with his next-older brother, he ran the entire seven miles length of Salem until he fell exhausted in a ditch beyond the city limits. Ran, yes, but not out of fear so much as in tornadic rage.

I was an Old Left Communist at the time. One of the other comrades frequently stopped by the house, a man who was CP City Chairman, still working on his doctorate at the State University, though occupied with small factory jobs in his attempts to encourage organizing among workers in that unusually industrialized Southern town. Heard David excoriate me in particularly fierce language. I replied mildly.

"Why does he do that?" asked Marvin, later.

"Testing me," I answered laconically.

"But why?" insisted the City Chairman.

"If you knew his mother, you'd understand. Actually, you may've met her. She's in the leaf-house union. A big bluff woman. Very dark. Evil tempered and rancid tongued. David's not used to being around adults who don't holler at him — unless they're suckers or weak somehow. He's trying to fix my perimeters in his mind and feelings. Seeing what I'll put up with, what he can get away with. Also, probably, because I treat him decently, he's not certain if I'm real. Wants to see if my friendliness has any depth. He may not have much self-esteem, behind all that fiery pride and flashing eyes. May sense that I have a point at which I'll break and snap at him, the way his mother does, in her frustration."

"Frustration?" Marvin pushed.

"They're a proud family. Behind the defiance and bluff, there's much intelligence, beautiful vitality. But I say 'frustrated' because they're living at the edge of poverty, and it obviously goads them, grinds them against their sensitiveness. David has several brothers — they all walk straight, proud, heads held high, eyes vital with meaning, the way he does. And a sister — wish you could see her face. Very lovely, but turned nigh vinegar with bitter pride. David's father's a craftsman. Locksmith. A small man, and with only one leg. Carries himself with great dignity — but that crutch is a symbol, no doubt, of his being vulnerable because of his color, especially here."

"Look — I have to say this," Marvin faltered briefly. "You know your inclinations. One more lapse, and you're out of the Party. But, more than that, you and I are vulnerable, too, all of us here are. The 'eyes' are on us. If one of the phoebes could make it even look like there was something between you and one of these boys —"

"All right, I know," I said reassuringly. "You don't have to worry about that."

He looked at me as if he wanted to shake his head.

I wondered if, maybe, he, too, ever parked near enough to the house to see and far enough away for me not to notice — so that he and the feds and lordknowswhatlocals could all be studying my clandestine nightly extrapolitical activities. A little more paranoia all around, more or less — I didn't know whether to laugh or to be afraid of some explosion within the Party or via the newspapers, or just to go ahead taking such risks as seemed to come natural. Some of all three, more like.

Now was my time to stare at David. I knew there was a strong high tone stretched exquisitely vibrating between us. I could not be overly cool without seeming to reject him. I dared not make light of his offer. He had cursed me, mocked me, tested me in every way he could think of. But when he would sit on my lap and put his arms around me, there was working a hunger for affection and respect that carried no guile, no coyness, no mocking. And he would kiss with a tenderness and passion delicately and intuitively balanced.

Apparently, now, having seen me with another in actual physical exchange, he felt his relationship with me to be threatened. His jealousy had to be more a function of his own insecurity, his own tenuous hold on selfbelief, than any kind of exclusive possessiveness.

"What do you want between you and me?" I asked him very deliberately.

He pointed significantly.

"You're too small," I said. "I'm afraid I'd hurt you."

"Try," he demanded, simply.

I have almost never liked jazz. Swing, even less. I've somehow felt that the spiritual intensity of black musicians has often had to be washed out, bleached, to a tepid quality, often disguised with loudness and jollity over suppressed pain, to entertain, amuse, and divert already sterile, patronizing, alienated whites.

But when David would come by the fish market where I worked and would stand watching while Tarn and I scaled and dressed fishes by the hundreds of pounds, sometimes he would beat out a rhythm with the flats of his hands against the backs of ice boxes in time to the roar of the electrical scaler. His hands, small, black on top, pale under, would force magic timpani to emerge out of very nothing. His eyes, wide, dark, intense, would fasten onto the pace of his hands as of drawing a rhythmic commitment from God in that sound. Sometimes, he would chant a poem or a song in his treble voice, high and melodic and joyous, always surprising after his constant tough chatter.

I'd known then he had a fury in him, a genius that needed a door, a way thru. I'd tried to speak to him of it, but he would look at me with those defiant eyes as if I were putting words on God's sacred parts, and I'd have to go silent before the bafflement and rage and longing in his Leonardo-fierce face.

He was also an artist. For small sums, I'd buy drawings from him, flattering myself that I was encouraging a budding creator, and at the same time hoping to tighten my purchase on his feelings. He often merely traced a picture that caught his eye. But when he drew himself — or me — or a horse, his intensity would take over, and the figure would come alive in charcoal under his hands. A fury would burn in his eyes and in the eyes of whatever he drew: David *knew*. I often felt myself in the presence of a young, inchoate god when I was with him. That excited me. I've been a deophilic ever since discovering my own inward infinite. I was frightened, too, considering the risks we took, but the cosmic force of what went on between us drove me beyond caution. David was one of the rare spirits. Even blind as he often was, he gave off divine sparks. I fed my soul on such.

I wanted to try. Trembled at the prospect. Was unable to get myself to do it. My body wouldn't. I asked David to make with me a simpler way, but he looked at me stubbornly.

"I won't."

"Think about it," I said.

The next evening, he came by the house again.

"I do what you want, hi much you gi'me?"

I looked at him, and our eyes lockt with the mystery, the nearness and the distance, of the wall between us. I knew it was not a matter of money. I had always given him money when he asked for it, not much, but boy-change. This was his way of keeping a handle on what was happening to him.

I made an offer. He agreed.

Later, he drew a pencil sketch of the two of us. How well that over-viewing spirit in him saw the gentleness of form, the grace of that young body, stretched face down, working generation in the thighs of the older man. I hid that drawing in a stack of newspapers. There was not one other soul I could show it to. As the ordeal before the House unAmerican Committee approached, I feared my flat would be searched. Grinding my teeth, I put a match to that drawing, wondering what, besides blank newsprint and pencil lead, went up in the brief hot flame. Before destroying that tissue of rare lines, I studied it long and long. David was still a child, but something in him knew, saw, more than we allow children to know or see, even in themselves.

Foolishly labelled 'the top red in North Carolina in 1956,' I was fired from my job in the fish market after appearing with thirteen others before the House unAmerican Committee under Congressman Walter, who died later of cancer.

David was apprehended by juvenile authorities for breaking and entering a neighborhood store. His mother asked me to plead with a juvenile court judge to release David to her. I attended the hearing with her.

When the judge began to question David's mother, she replied defensively, kept trying to explain that she had done all she knew how to make that child behave himself. He asked her if she loved David. She floundered. The judge called a recess.

Continued on next page

While she and I waited in the empty hearing-room, I spoke to her rather firmly. "For God's sake, when he asks if you love the boy, tell him you do. You think he's going to let you have custody of a child you're ashamed of?"

It appeared to make no difference to the judge that I had been accused of subversion by a Congressional Committee. Perhaps he felt that a black child's life was beyond making such distinctions over. Or maybe he had a flair for paradox.

When he convened the hearing again, I observed that David's mother had been upset over appearing in court but that, certainly, she loved her son. He asked her again if she loved David.

"Of course, I do!" she exclaimed belligerently.

He glanced at me with wry mouth and raised eyebrows. For a moment, it went thru my head that perhaps both of us wondered if she had ever told David she loved him. Yet he and I were quite different levers of the very culture that generated such distance in some oppressed families or reinforced closeness in others.

David sat in stolid observation. Real judgment, appraisal, awareness, rode his face. He was asked little and volunteered nothing.

He was released in custody of his mother, with the stipulation that I'd keep in regular touch.

Six months later, I left the South for New York City. Quit the Communists. Began my life from scratch again. David broke into another store, was arrested, spent two years in a state 'training' school. We exchanged letters. I promised to let him visit me when he was released.

When he got out of the state youth house and began writing urgent letters pleading to be allowed to come live with me in New York, I sweated much. My income was limited — I worked in a university library. The idea of loving, living, with an individual of David's intensity — was a heady lure. My brain and loins swarmed with cicadas and leeches. I was terrified over the prospect of taking on what, in effect, was a teenage son, a black son, with all his needs, material and emotional, to fill. How could I support both of us on my scant salary? How could I write with the constant pressure of an abrasive, demanding personality in that small railroad flat? Yet I kept remembering his art and — our lovemaking. I

was torn between my gluttony and my inadequacy. I partly tried to justify my desire for him by speculating over whether my saying Yes might make a difference in his creative growth. Strachey Taglicht, my understanding supervisor at the library, told me implicitly that I was deceiving myself and that I'd be a damned fool to take on a black teenaged son.

David wrote, called, implored. He was not begging favors. He was pleading for his life. He knew what kind of existence he could expect to lead in the South as a graduate of a penal academy for black adolescents. Not far differently from my own illusions about the City, he may have imagined a lifestyle, and a future, sprung into actuality from some caricature Hollywood set.

I agreed, finally, on a trial basis. It was a cruel concession. I knew what the situation was. Did I really expect a miracle?

One afternoon, I heard a knock and opened the door to a young man. Still a youth, but tall, still very erect, still darklight with those invincible eyes. He quickly made it clear he wanted no more part of me but soon found himself a girlfriend.

One day, I left a pan of beans and hamburger on the stove for him and went on to work. When I returned home, the hamburger had been picked out, leaving only the beans. When David showed up late that night, I cursed him, called him a son of a bitch. To my amazement, since I had no idea he had any feeling at all for his mother, tears started in his eyes and ran down his face.

"I'm not go'n stay here. You callt my mother out'n her name."

Stricken, I apologized, then tried to give a long rambling explanation about my income, the need to be fair with each other in how we ate, lived, spent. It wasn't long before David began to realize there was no real life for him with me in New York. He returned South, taking a secondhand suit of mine with him. It was green corduroy and seemed to me to reflect my nature. I wrote him about it, but he never returned it.

The following summer, he appeared on my roof one afternoon when I was diligently giving my mostly naked body keratosis under the ConEdison sun of Lower Manhattan.

Standing on the brick roofrim and looking down at my face from behind me, he said, "Y'all don't like dark skins on us, but you can't get enough on y'own self."

I got up and returned downstairs to the apartment with him. I leaned him against the enamelled bathtub cover and put my arms on his shoulders.

"Look," I said hoarsely, "If you're going to stay with me, you're going to do what you used to do."

"I ain't," he said quietly.

"Yes, you are. Right now, too. I was your friend, and you took my suit. And you made a lot of long-distance telephone calls back home without telling me. Now you can do something for me."

"Hey, no," he tried to explain. "Peewee was helping me pack my suitcase. He the one put your suit in there. I didn't know it till I got home. He thought it was mine."

"Yeah," I said, "And the Statue of Liberty had twins this morning right after breakfast."

We went to bed, but he did as little as he could. I wouldn't — couldn't — force him. I looked at his beautiful body with longing and realized I was torturing us both, stupidly and uselessly. We lay together awhile, embracing the shells of our wasted friendship like warm corpses.

He wouldn't stay at my place, disappeared for a few weeks, then took to spending the nights sitting up on the commode in the hall toilet. I'd get up to piss, would find him there, made him come to bed with me, where we'd sleep, lovelessly, sadly, sweating against one another. Then he disappeared for months.

A lover moved in with me, another very insecure fellow, looking more for a father than for a mate. When David showed up one day, I decided to avoid problems and simply stood in the doorway and told him there was just nothing between us any longer. A single round gold stud gleamed in his left earlobe. His eyes, no longer charged with tornadic fury, burned volcano red around the dark pupils.

He said nothing then, but turned his back and strode back down the hall. I shut the door. I never saw David again, but I can't forget him. I was a fool to worry about the other lover's insecurity. Lack of selfbelief is a bottomless pit that no careful tactics can fill. David and I had been kin to the roots of our souls. When I ceased to believe in his creative rage, it was as if I had taken an axe to something germinal in both of us. A demon of his entered me then that I must reckon with. I have to make friends with my own darkest self.

Cheers, Cheers for Old Cha Cha Ass

As if acne and puberty were not bad enough, in high school there was a circle of *charming* boys who called me 'Cha Cha Ass Borawski'.

'Hey, look at Walter, he cha chas when he walks'.
'He cha chas when he tries to kick a ball'.
'He probably cha chas while he shits — let's watch'.

'Hey look, Jayne Mansfield's in Borawski's gym suit'.
'Hey, Jayne, what's happened to your tits?'
'If Walter had Mansfield's tits I'd screw him'.
'If Walter had Mansfield's tits we'd ALL screw him'.

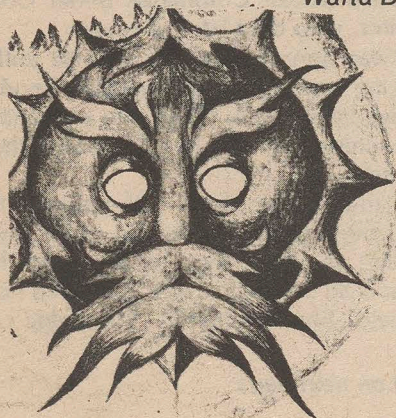
Ha ha ha. Cha cha cha. Ha ha. Cha cha. Ha. Cha.

That was close as I got to a gang bang 'til I was twenty-two and *not* sitting in a toilet stall, trembling, crying, making up god.

When I said No the their tenth-year reunion, I added a note to Carol Reed, class secretary: 'Cha Cha Ass Borawski will not be there. For the alumni record, he don't mind the name any more.

But now he merinques when he walks, and dreams up the devil while he shits.

Walta Borawski



GAY BALLADE

As I think on Sun like a rust tipped brush
Attaining steel, down the firescape's rim
Now Painting Windows with its deepening flush

My Tree of Memory grows a New Limb

Vague voices float through air on faces dim
from hair, then echo down the walls of time
that Room has vanished where I knew Mad Jim

And All Wild Queens Dancing in their Prime.

Bearing White Lily on Twilight's Streets this
Lush
His Regal Majesty, struts to a Hymn
In praise of Her he would become. A Rush

My Tree of Memory Grows a New Limb

to see a cane he swished through Night, a trim
cold blade embedded at its core, what crime
lies hidden in Dark's Womb with shadows grim

And All Wild Queens Dancing in Their Prime

His Man's skull imbued with a Girl's soft skin
to crush
His virile seed before it grows in strength through
Him
A scent from cheap perfume permeates His Husk

My Tree of Memory grows a New Limb

Recalling how I drank, Its cloying fragrance the
brim
of ecstasy overflow and climb
My Senses till I walk the cities slim

And All Wild Queen's Dancing in Their Prime

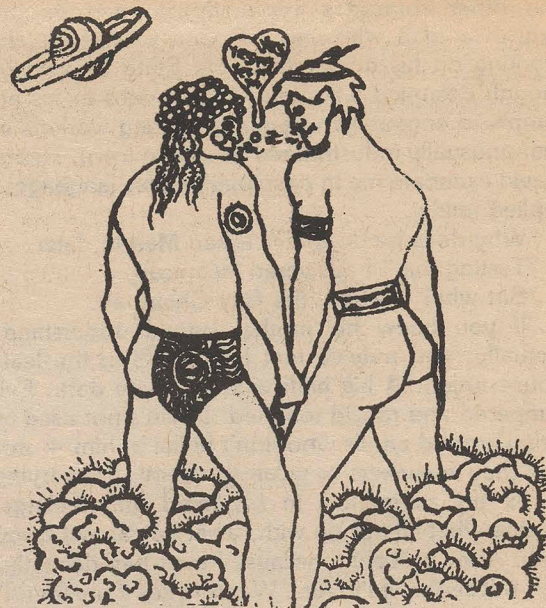
Lithe Girl Made Boy's must grapple in the Gym

My Tree of Memory Grow A New Limb

To drift on beaches, Old Love tastes like Lime

And, All Wild Queens Dancing in Their Prime

William Barre



Fruit Break

In grammar school
I used to sit next to a country boy
wondering what part of town his was.
Whenever he stood I would press my fingers
fresh and warmly into the wooden seat,
then quietly enveloping my nose
I would cough or snifle,
feeling more discreet, more casual.

During fruit break I slipped
across our aisle to his space,
reading the desktop engravings,
stealing into it
feeling into it
for a blank sheet because
leaving him a drawing is partly
routine for me at that age.
First a line, then a man
walking hairy and naked to the waist
arms thick and tied,
off a pirates gangplank
covered with the sweat from my hand,
left in his desk stuck between two books.

Pappas

Who am i?

sex
i am the unlicked stickum
on the back of
wintergreen-flavored envelopes

i am the avocado pit planted
directly in dirt
rather than toothpicked
over a dimestore wine glass
full of stale water
(and for this reason Mother Nature
is proud of me)

i am the bandaid on the bloodtest
(at once unprotected and protective . . .)

politic

when people turn to one another and
in disconcerted voices say:
"You don't really believe that!"
i, alone
really believe that.

sex

i am many of the things that are bad for you:
caffeine addiction
a defaced YIELD sign
an open nose
an open mind

i am many of the things that are good for you:
red typewriter ribbons
sterile park pigeons
shatterproof lenses
indefensible offenses

i am many of the things in for you:
a Full Grown
Iguana
who's come out
of the sewer
to gobble up the pet owners
who once flushed me down

politic

i have an innate ability to see
both sides
of an issue . . .
as its main train
of thought
rides blindly by . . .

sex

i am known in Gay Slang as a "Hot Number"
because i am impeccably thin
because i have spicy eyes
and mostly because i am one of
the best lays on the Mid-Atlantic coast

i am known in Gay Slang as a "Mad Queen"
because i shaved off my beard in 1974
because i am public about my predilection
for satin pajamas
and mostly because i still have a stake
in my effemininity

i am unknown in Straight Slang . . .

i am a known homosexual in a nation that
doesn't wanna know about it

and mostly . . . i am not afraid

politic

i like my stripes diagonal
i write my sentences in brite blue haste
i prefer my "i"'s dotted
(and hence: in lower case)

sex

i am a Series E Government Bond of the emotions
i am a sexual chlorophyll of the erotic
i am an extension cord of the filth in your
imagination

politic

i am those secrets
i no longer hide from my mother
i resemble residue
at the bottom of my illustrator's bong
i am the smell of something burning

sex

i emulate the black men over 35
i sleep with
and the Caucasian boys under 25
i sleep with
and all the women
inbetween
of iridescent creeds and colours
who have lain beside me in tidy beds
while dreams of our ideals
made sheepish love
above us
yes, i am a still-life reproduction of . . .
. . . all of the above

politic

i like my stripes diagonal
i write my sentences in brite blue haste
i prefer my "i"'s dotted
(and hence: in lower case)

question:

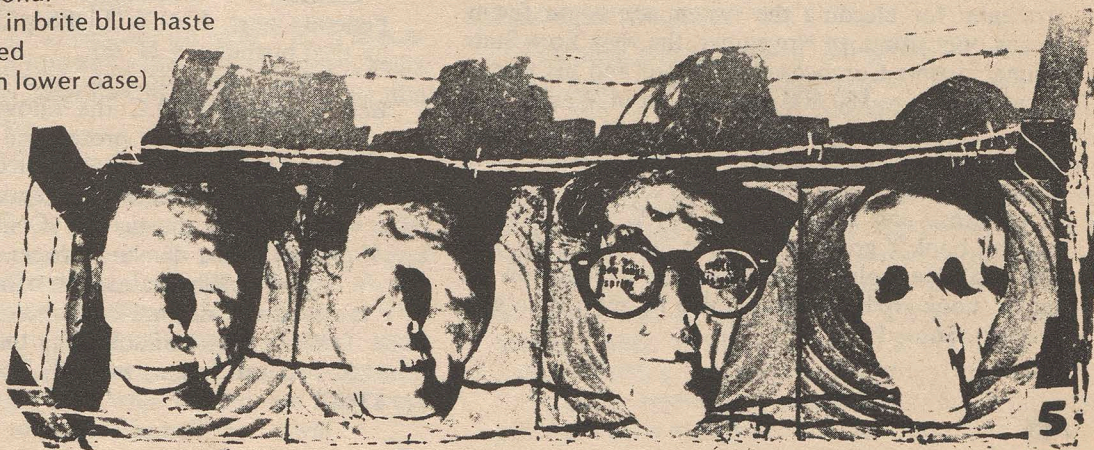
if i am what i am
what i could, when i can
then does that answer: why?

(in this present time and tense)

who
am

i
?

Chasen Gaver
(June 1977)



Prison Page

Pen Pals Wanted

reply to — Phillip Romenico, Box 1367, Boulder, Colo. 80302.

"with the utmost best wishes and kindest regards. . ."
Billie L. Ruiz, Reg. No. 2149135, P.O. Box 1000,
Marion, Ill. 62959

"I'm lonely and lack communication from the outside world. . ." Dark hair, blue eyes, 5'10", 185 lbs.
Greg Johnson 039201, Box 747, Starke, Fla. 32091.

I am french "passive g/w/29, 5'10", 165 lbs., brown hair, hazel eyes, fair complexion and my sign is Scorpio. . . Any jocks or butches who would like to write and be a pen pal in the interim before an eventual meeting . . . and send pics with or without clothes, one of each preferably. Thank you very much. Dean J. McKeever, Wisconsin State Prison c/o Box C-Drawer 8841, Waupun Wisc. 53963.

WM, young and healthy wishes to correspond with lively people. No phonies. Write me — Jeff Jacabitti, P.O. 747, Starke, Fla. 32091.

My name is Dale Collins 144-774, P.O. Box 511 Columbus, Ohio 43216. I am 20 years old, 5'6" tall, 130 lbs., brown hair, hazel eyes. I'm a white man and I'm in prison. I have no family or friends on the outside to write me, visit me or assist me with my needs while here and I would like to hear from anyone willing to write me and extend their help and friendship to a lonely and destitute man. I will answer any and all letters, so won't you please write me?

Editor:

You may recall the efforts made last summer by the Baton Rouge Police Department to discredit me and criminalize me in retaliation for my gay-rights activism . . . hiring a shyster, do-nothing homophobe \$1,500 rip-off artist, Sept. 23, 1976 . . . threatening to withdraw as counsel unless I agreed to plead "guilty" to "simple kidnapping" (punishable by 5 years imprisonment, state pen) . . . May 16, 1977 began filing defense motions: 1) no evidence; 2) no weapon; 3) no incriminating statements and 4) no probable cause for the arrest or for a conviction.

The shyster insisted on: 1) a judge not a jury trial; 2) no fact nor character witnesses; 3) my submitting to a lie detector test and 4) my submitting to cross-examination by the D.A. I refused to fall for these traps, nor forfeit my rights — as one merely accused of a "crime."

Sept. 23, 1977, the D.A. dropped these charges. I had been able to have the stooge sign a legal document, witnessed, notarized, and filed with the D.A.'s office — "Withdrawal of Complaint/ Accusation" — the only "evidence" the police department and D.A.'s office ever had.

(Their "case" was the sell-out artist, shyster-attorney.)

Huey L. Beverly
P.O. Box 1251
Baton Rouge, La. 70821

Dog Day Ripoff

John Wojtowicz is the famed bank robber whose act of anarchy and terrorist bravura was snatched by Warner Brothers and made into the major motion picture, *Dog Day Afternoon*. John's courageous strategies for bleeding the system are again facing strong opposition. In November, the New York State Crime Victims Compensation Board and his lawyer decided to seize \$80,000 due him from Warner and AEC, Inc. His new lawyer has filed in Manhattan Supreme Court to reverse the decision. Also, John has recently rejected a token offer from the profiteers of his story and is asking for 1-10% of the movie and/or book's gross or a lump sum of \$250,000-\$400,000. He is also requesting to be included on the movie/book credit list, something he never even got. Work it, Sonny!

NEWS RELEASE: FROM THE U.S. PENITENTIARY AT McNEIL ISLAND, WASHINGTON

On April 9, 1971, while watching the Saturday Nite movie in the prison auditorium, THOMAS J. COLVIN was fatally stabbed from behind.

In May of 1976, GLENN LEVINE was fatally stabbed — also in the auditorium.

These two deaths were the only two murders in McNeil Island in the last year. Both victims were GAY. And, in both cases, officials KNEW IN ADVANCE, of a threat on their lives. And, in each case, the victim had recently signed a "release of responsibility" form, which released the institution from being held accountable for their deaths.

GLENN LEVINE, a black GAY PRISONER, had repeatedly asked officials for protection and disclosed that he was going to be killed.

One and a half months before THOMAS COLVIN was murdered, officials received a written death threat on him.

Another case was the death of ERNEST M. VALENZUELA, Vice Chairman of the National Gay Prisoners Coalition, who was murdered Nov. 8, 1973 at the U.S. Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas.

Federal prison officials use GAY inmates as a means of control — to pacify the most aggressive and dangerous inmates. But, when they are no longer useful or when they resist this type of treatment, they often end up dead from official "negligence."

JON WILDES is a GAY INMATE currently at McNeil Island Penitentiary, who has endured sexual assaults and rapes in addition to being "bought," "sold" and "owned" by other inmates, while guards either encourage these acts or pretend they don't see it happening.

In November of 1976, an inmate who is considered by the Bureau of Prisons to be one of the most dangerous inmates in the Federal Prison System, began to pressure Jon Wildes for sexual favors. He also asked and was given permission by officials to move in to Wildes cell. Previously used criteria for cell changes were abandoned by the officials and moved this inmate in with Wildes without the consent of Wildes or others who lived in the 10 man cell. Since then, Wildes has been placed in segregation by his own choosing, and has asked to be protected from this type of treatment. Officials seem to greatly resent this and have repeatedly tried to "encourage" Wildes to return to population. This even in spite of the fact that they are aware that the inmate Wildes sought to get away from, has put out a DEATH CONTRACT on him. Officials have also tried to coerce Wildes into signing the "release of responsibility" form, but he is resisting these attempts.

As a result of attempts by JON WILDES to expose these tactics, he was suddenly moved from McNeil Island on April 18th and placed in a strip cell at the Seattle Washington County Jail. Several days later, he was flown to the U.S. Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas and again placed in a strip cell. On April 26th he was chained down and moved to the U.S. Penitentiary at Marion, Ill. where he again was lodged in a strip cell and on April 27th he was moved to the U.S. Penitentiary at Terre Haute, Ind. where he is now being kept in the "hole." In essence, he is being punished in a cruel and unusual manner, simply for asking for the protection of his life.

WE MUST STOP THIS INSIDIOUS ATTEMPT AT GAY GENOCIDE, THE LEGAL MURDER OF GAYS IN THE FEDERAL SYSTEM.

HERE IS HOW YOU CAN HELP:

1. Support and Contribute to the Legal Campaign for JON WILDES. This request, an impassioned plea for financial HELP to defray the costs of legal representation, WILL SAVE A LIFE. One of our lives — that of JON STATEN WILDES.

BELIEVE — without immediate legal recourse in Federal Court, JON WILDES will not be alive to see his next birthday (8-21-78).

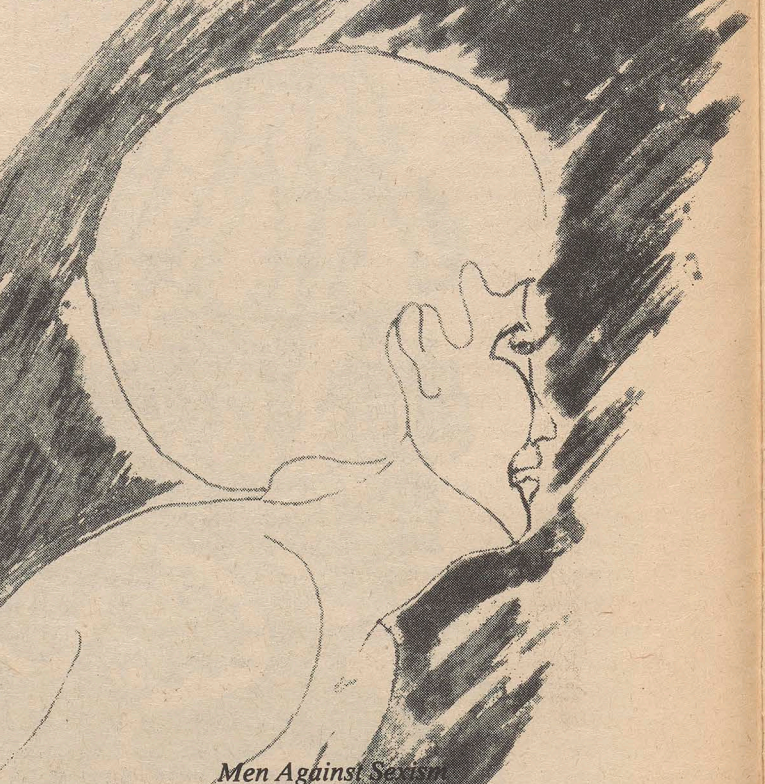
2. Write, phone or wire, Attorney General Griffin Bell, Washington, D.C. the following:

"We vigorously protest the official negligence and subhuman treatment accorded GAY PRISONERS in Federal Penitentiaries, and further protest the injustices to JON STATEN WILDES 20912. We demand proper disciplinary action to be taken against the officials at McNeil Island and Atlanta Prisons."

3. Write letters of solidarity to Jon Wildes 20912, U.S. Federal Prison, Box 33, Terre Haute, Indiana 47808.

Will John Gibbs please write back to us? We received a letter a year ago exposing gay set-ups in prison. We can't find your address. Sorry. Looking forward to renewed communication, Rag.

Will Thom S., who sent us a letter in January, please write back? We're with you in spirit but your address is lost.



Men Against Sexism

Men against sexism is a multi-racial group of gay and anti-sexist prisoners who are confined in the Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla. The homophobic conditions of our confinement has caused us to organize for self defense. Our purpose is to combat some of the more obvious forms of gay oppression; the exploitation of weaker prisoners and other manifestations of sexism. This includes learning how to protect and care for our weak, our aged, and our disabled brothers. It also includes dealing with our own backward attitudes towards each other and our brothers and sisters on the outside.

In keeping with these goals, we have implemented several programs aimed at increasing the quality of life for gay and passive prisoners. We meet the 'chain' (the transporting prison bus) each week and provide orientation, safe cells and escort service for vulnerable prisoners. We also are working on pulling gay and passive prisoners out of protective custody and giving them what support and protection we can provide. So far, no one has yet had to check back into protective custody. We write articles and do other forms of anti-sexist education within the population. We want to conduct workshops on such subjects as rape, masculinity, and homosexuality, but have not yet obtained the time and materials necessary to do so.

Help reduce the fear of violence we must presently live with. We need donations of cash, office machines and equipment, postage stamps, and the like. We need pen pals, visitors, space in the gay media, letters written, petitions circulated and warm bodies in the streets — should it become necessary for them to be there.

We need large sums of money because we need to pay up to \$200 for several four-man cells we can use as safe cells for those who need them. At present, all the cells are owned by straight prisoners. We do not have the strength necessary to overcome the long tradition of cells being real estate. Our only alternative at this point is to buy them. We need office equipment and supplies so we can furnish our office and get it functioning.

In addition to our material needs, we need your energy. We need people to write letters to Doug Vinzant, the Warden here, asking him what he is doing for the gay prisoners at Walla Walla. We need people to circulate our petition to fire and replace the homophobic Protestant Chaplain here. We need pen pals and people to visit us so we can deepen our personal ties with our brothers and sisters in the free community — what we call 'minimum custody.'

In short, we need your LOVE. With your CARE and CONCERN, we will be able to sustain a high level of struggle. Then, perhaps, we can demonstrate our LOVE for our communities. Send donations and requests for additional information to:

Rick English, Director
Men Against Sexism
P.O. Box 520
Walla Walla, WA. 99362



Coming Out "S" In Print

by Bruce Michael Gelbert

In September, 1970 a seemingly significant man in my life gave me my second greatest scare of that twelvemonth merely by proposing a conversation on the topic of S and M. Is it not true that the most susceptible would be the most reluctant to probe? I swiftly derailed that line of discussion and postponed my enlightenment regarding sadism and masochism until the following year.

By October, 1971 I had taken the bold steps of wearing my keys dangling from a black leather ring alongside my left bluejeans pocket and sporting knee-high black leather boots. This was in the days when everyone and anyone didn't wear keys and boots and they really were effective signals as to one's preference.

My first experience as a master took place in the Central Park Ramble. I made the first public announcement of my coming out as a sadist at an impromptu consciousness raising session attended by several of my Gay Activists Alliance and Queens College friends at the GAA Firehouse. My identification was clinched when, at a Community Relations Committee of GAA S and M forum, I came dressed not unlike the panelists.

My school friends, somewhat alarmed at the revelation of my preference, ran immediately to GAA's trusty S and M experts-in-residence to seek reassurance about me in my "dangerous" new concern. Their worst fears were soon allayed: I wasn't likely to rape or kill anyone (or to be raped or killed) or to start living out my rough dominance and submission fantasies in any other than sexual contexts. Soon they would be rallying to my defense when a Queens College teacher characterized sadism and masochism as "perversions."

Admittedly part — but only part — of my reason for coming out "S" at the time was political. In GAA, much emphasis was placed on the negative status of being more oppressed than thou. Male, non-transvestite and white, I could hope for little sympathy: Jewish didn't seem to qualify as a likely minority to win one "oppression points" in the political correctness competition. But as a sadomasochistic leather person (or as leathery as my then chosen degree of financial indulgence would permit), I felt I could justifiably holler "subminority oppression" as loudly as anyone. And so I did.

Theme and Variations

In my sadistic experimentations over the next few years I covered much territory. A flirtation with leather belts led to my decision that anything I couldn't manage with my bare limbs, etc., wasn't worth my while doing: just a personal, and not a universal, preference, you see. I also found that an excess of dialogue during sex and an overabundance of scene setting before it were, likewise, not my thing. Some people talk a good sex scene: I prefer to act out my threats and keep my torture chambers in my head, thanks.

A word here on the abusive dialogue many people associate with S and M. Not all of us derive satisfaction, author John Rechy and the reportedly extreme California leather scene to the contrary, from homophobic language used for humiliation. Most of us are definitely not expressing anti-gay antagonism/guilt in the sex-connected violence we initiate. (That's a presumption: for many, dominance is symbolic and the actual pain infliction minimal.) For some of us, the violence is the manifestation of hostility we feel unable to vent at the source of our frustrations, etc., which, when meted out in mutually agreeable company produces satisfactory results.

Pain is relative; individual thresholds of pain differ. What is the ordinary expression of exuberance to the one appears as violent, passionate excess to the other. What is a painful thrashing to one may be exciting stimulation to the other. Put a leather costume over it all and it becomes clearly labeled, practically an institution. For some of us, S and M is the grown-up extension and not illogical outgrowth of play continuing from the childhood we've been reluctant to leave. And there is no want of playmates.

Not all of us inevitably fuck. "You're not really a sadist," A (Oct./Nov., 1976) said to me. "S and M people like to fuck." A's challenge notwithstanding, I am sure that every conceivable sex act can be worked into an S and M scene. Nor is it inconceivable that the traditional dominant and submissive roles be reassigned. When I first saw the list of S and M handkerchief code colors and their meanings reprinted from *Scene and Machine* magazine and saw that cocksucking (light blue) was designated as a master/sadist/dominant partner's responsibility, I thought, how logical, how in keeping with my own attitude. Most masters think of cocksucking as a task a slave/masochist/submissive partner should be forced to do and it can certainly be used that way in an S and M scene. On the other hand, if a master renders his charge immobile and proceeds to have his way with him, oral-genitally, who, then, need I ask, is the boss?

Even he who is fucked can still be he who is in control. A friend who fucked a certain well-known ballet dancer while this latter day Nijinsky was beating him can attest to that.

On Making a Public Declaration

I am rough and I like to indulge my desire to be rough. I am able to find people who want me to be rough with them and there's no lack of warmth and affection in these relationships. (Rule of thumb: alternate one aggressive and/or pain-inducing act with one affectionate and/or specifically sexual one.) Coming out "S" in print was not an easy decision. As a writer, I must write what I know, but I had kept this side out of print intentionally for a while.

People have developed so many misconceptions about S and M. We've gotten so much bad press.

People let their fears and anxieties run away with their logic: when they think of sadism, mass murders and fascism come to mind. Responsibility and guilt for the acts of murderers are not in order for those involved in consensual S and M.

As a result of coming out in print as a sadist do I face fewer confusions or not? Someone once spread word around that I was the roughest sadist on the east coast long before it could have been anywhere near true. He should have known better. Anyone who is put off by and frightened of me because of my keys, boots and reputation isn't likely to be anyone I'd find it essential to experience. Someone who probably shouldn't have been in the leather bar at which I met him was illogically terrified about what I might do to him once we arrived home together. My preferences are negotiable. I can be very gentle — I'm not interested in doing anything to anyone against their will.

Are most leathermen sexist? Most people are sexist. I consider myself (relatively) liberated, of (reasonably) high consciousness, am nevertheless very much into S and M and (frequently) exhilarated at this freedom of my expression. S and M was a problem for me only when I was repressing it.

I've written two short stories and several poems about various aspects of physical/emotional S and M (as well as two about mental S and M, but that's another issue) and now this. The first of the stories and a poem, both exploring the watersports scene (that's piss) were in the Summer, 1977 issue of *Fag Rag*. The second was in the Feb.-Mar., 1978 issue of the same periodical. In this one, a young man is punished as follows, largely for his being a seminary student and his decision to become a priest:

"I had him lick my boots and then ground them in his crotch. I shoved my fingers roughly up his ass and then made him lick his own shit from my nails. I spit in his face. I slapped him and pinched his nipples..."

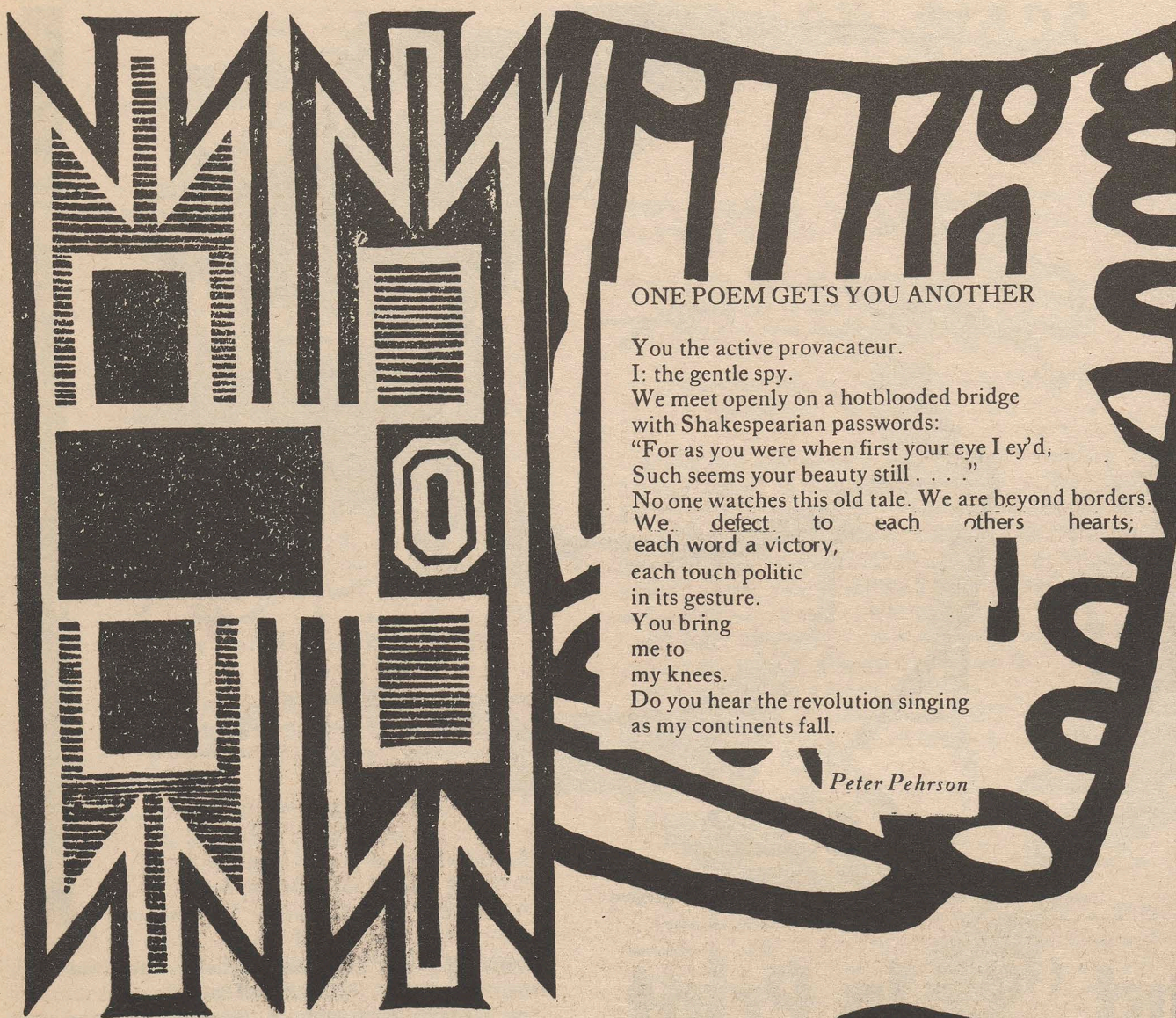
"I bound his hands, forced him down on his bed and sucked his cock, slamming my head, full force and repeatedly, into his abdomen. I fucked him, roughly and without benefit of any lubricant. I withdrew before reaching orgasm and forced his head down upon my cock, while continuing to rain blows on his ass."

Needless to say, this is not fiction. At first I was hesitant about these revelations about what had been very private aspects of my life: then I got over the shyness.

Finale and Coda

I identify principally as a sadist, but also as a sadomasochist. Like most sadists, I've tried the "M" scene also — it is essential to know what a "bottom man" experiences — but my avowed preference is to be the master. Some of the most exciting sexual contacts I've had have been confrontations with other sadists: the frictions and the energy can make for a wild scene despite the few necessary compromises.

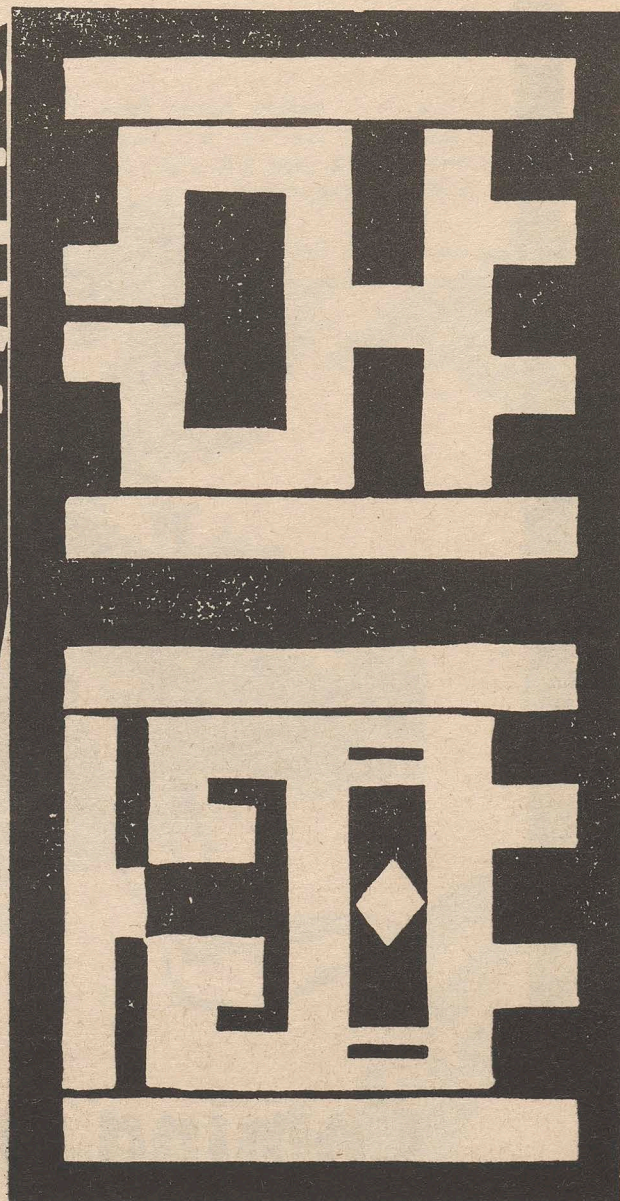
While it is, of course, impossible to cover all facets of such a vast and varied topic in the space of one article, I hope that I've succeeded in beginning some myth shattering: sadism is very distinct from desire to rape, kill or maim; sexism and homophobia have no place in liberated S and M relationships; S and M sex is virtually unlimited as to the possible sex acts that can be involved and as to who can take what part.



ONE POEM GETS YOU ANOTHER

You the active provocateur.
I: the gentle spy.
We meet openly on a hotblooded bridge
with Shakespearian passwords:
"For as you were when first your eye I ey'd,
Such seems your beauty still . . ."
No one watches this old tale. We are beyond borders.
We, defect to each others hearts;
each word a victory,
each touch politic
in its gesture.
You bring
me to
my knees.
Do you hear the revolution singing
as my continents fall.

Peter Pehrson



"HUSTLING"

When the clock's alarm calls me,
I wake up in a twilight hour.
I get out of bed, brew some coffee,
eat a cigarette,
& pour into tight pants.
The radio's playing 'Blues in the Night'
— for me it's a working song.

Vincent Verrall

In the Stairwell outside the Tearoom

Four flights of Possibility
echoing to a pit between my legs
where the Fact completely dictates.

Ted Clausen



TWO HUMORS

One
WITH APOLOGY TO BYRON

So we'll go no more a-cruising
so late into the night
though the flesh be still as willing
and the muscle fat and tight.

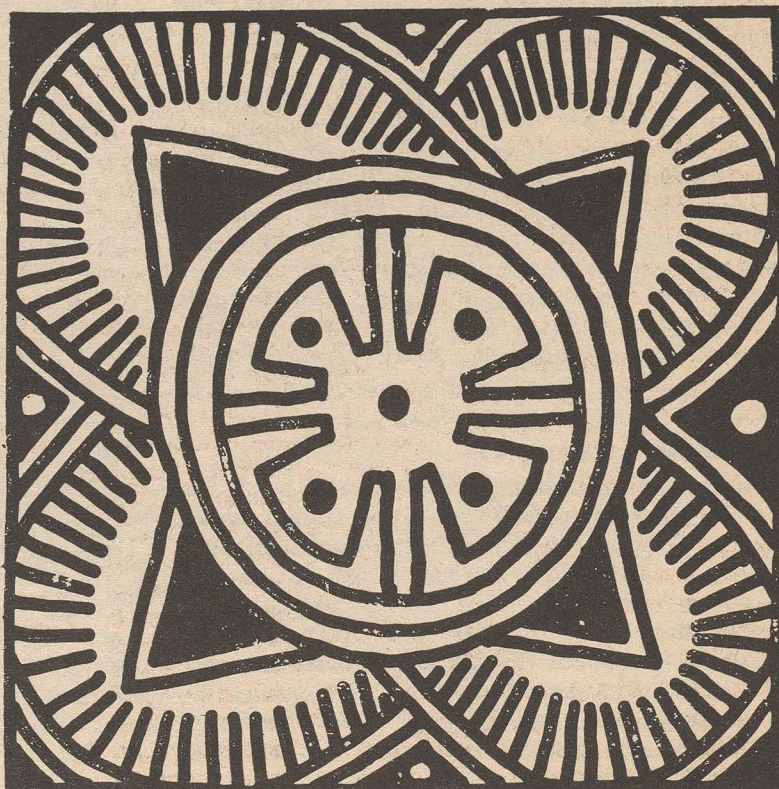
For the prick outwears its sheath
and the tongue wears out its lash
and the anus cools its heat
and the heart dries an ash.

Though parks are made for loving
and cars have plenty room,
we'll go no more a-cruising
under the muggers' moon!

Two
MASTURBATORY HAIKU

Get out of my dream. . .
you wet my bed
with Love in my hand,
my prick is dead.

—Maurice Kenny



REVEILLE

What infernal darkness dredges the soul
the bottoms of rivers

reave crystal balls
tiresome the soul again the soul defining
failing to be understood lost in language
frosted in icing off cakes plowed
by medieval plowmen lost in sweet
somewhere asking to be found

the backshelf

of the mind floundering
in memories of *all of us* wanting to be
found the foundlings stepping out
of the sweetness of the ordinary
looking for the extra
ordinary in ourselves
self the body alone bare
rock bottom the river flowing over
the sight up the sky from under
seen by the lonely who sing
only *they know* ways out of the ordinary
o mary in me sweet fairy locked in darkness
who can turn the key but myself?
Lift me mary in me out of the ordinary;
rampage back into the forbidden territories
where arrest stop arrest stop arrest stop
THEY wait for us we special ones
who have found *the way* extra
ordinary why can't I say it?
why can't I say it? Who has the day
light hours locked from me? Where has
my voice o mary in me gone o sweet
fairy rose polyantha rose

your legend rises
as fragrance out of flowers in asphalt!
Growing out of what pure determination!
COPPER!!!! No metal melted uniform
so blue not river even blue so
as those clothes make their way
over the bodies of these salaried me
stationed guarding toilets now from use
abuse they say from Show & Tell secrets/
sucrets of the body lobbying for release
locked away from ourselves. Revel
in it sweet fairy police what no one
can take away learn the secret locked
away within yourself. Have men in blue
kneel in front of you their teeth pulling
at your brass zippers begging
secrets spelled out
in language easily understood.
Do you believe it no one understands us
but us we ourselves stand alone bare
in our clothes sheltering ourselves
within the extraordinary knowledge of knowing.

Sal Farinella

Buena Vista

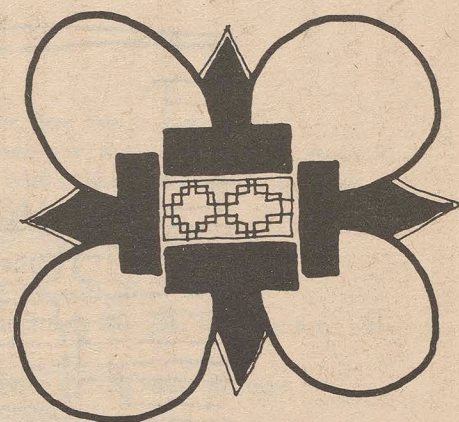
somehow wedged together
we lean towards
our lips
moist warm air

blew
down
through
tunnel overgrowth

we joined more men
nude
stretching
out
mouth towards mouth
cock into cock
exchanges changing
sweet skins in the sand
brushing syncopations
and the air heats

we
kiss and kiss
we
suck and suck
we
love
again and again
into
soft wet
circular
oblivions

Michael Cullen



THE NUMBER PUZZLE

My life follows 13 sliding squares
It fits neatly in one hand
but I hold it with two.
The squares alternate between red and black
Each overlaps the other,
the object has always been
to count sequentially from 1 to 13
red-black, red-black, red-black.

Donald's eyes would close each time
his lips slid down and over
the neck and body of a Budwieser.
I see you still play number puzzles, he said.
I can't put it down.
Turning the label to me: I know what you mean
I've been in therapy for almost a year

He was a black one near the bottom
I moved him over
to get Glenn in the top row.
1,2,3, and 4 were easy
but I had to move
7 from the third row to get Debbie behind the 6.
She is a red square
I always have to move her back one to get one more up

When I think of you
I wonder how important it is to count from left to right
So there are three reds in a row.
I always get stuck on 9
which leaves 8 after 10 and 13 before 11.
You are in New York,
9-8-10, 9-10-13-11
You look as though you hold your puzzle with one
hand;
maybe you mix your squares on purpose.

In algebra they never told us
that there would always be a number puzzle.
In geometry they never taught us
how to slide the squares.
And in trig, they never said
once you're done
there will always be a space left over.

Timm Louis



To A New Haven Commuter

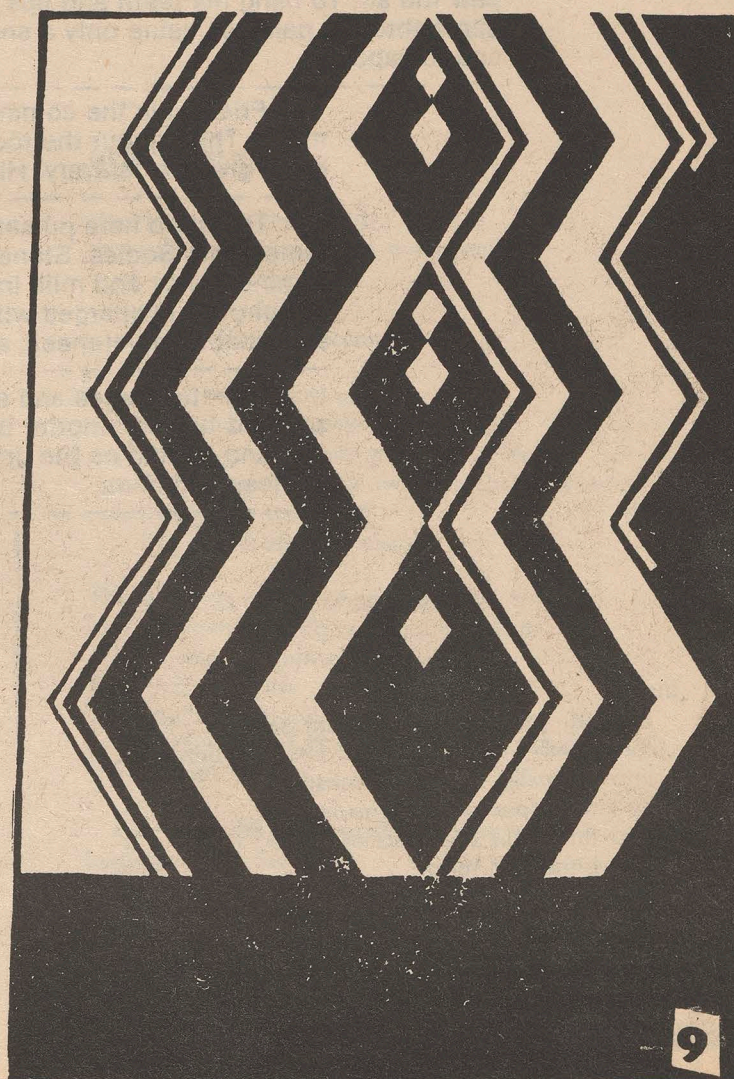
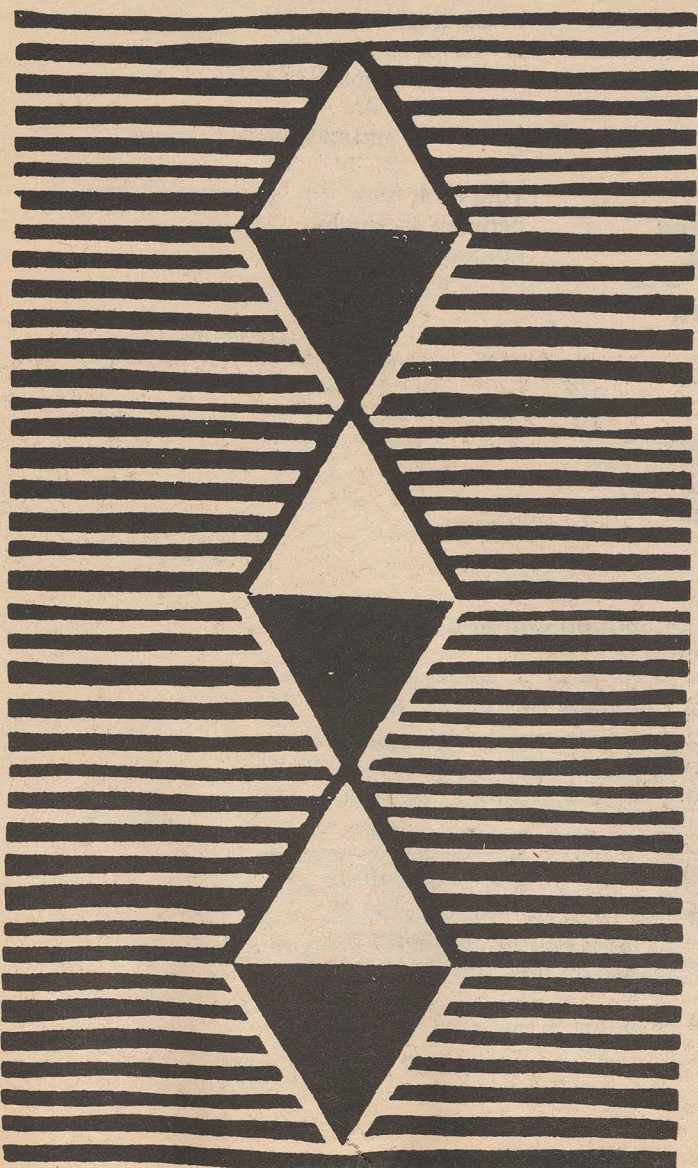
Splashed pansies upon your hillside
just before dawn.
Hope you noticed the prettiest one
smiling by your door.

Clattered romped, roved thru
silly cities, several
quasi pious towns and
wove a spell from vitality and charm
to have people see themselves only
as they are.

Played at verbosity
til i sought a self inflicted lobotomy;
Flown upon his mind stream then
climbed upon his energy beam.

He's calling me again
with thoughts of a new medium.
I'll take heed,
mount my black steed and
color the colorless skies.

Danny Drenga





GRAPHS: disparate paragraphs calling attention to men

"Sentences are not emotional
but paragraphs are."

There are no names for the inhabitants of this dark contem-
plation. (It is dark because the lights are low.) Names are
shed, faces replaced, as easily as clothes.

Bodies aflame, with glances at reflections in store windows
to make appraisals of motion and intent, they make their entrance,
they adopt new and sudden form. (Each night creates new species.)
Beyond any light, sifting in from the darkness, they — singular
elements, grains of sand and dust — swirl and converge to form a
cloud.

Of course, upon even cursory examination, any cloud takes on
human and fleshy characteristics. And this cloud immediately re-
sembles muscular bodies of air and moisture rotating about a center
of starlight. It is as if the surrounding darkness itself calls
forth a glow in the heaving. The bodies of bodies ignite, casting
off reflections and glare. Stars float loosely near the ceiling,
buoyed by a harmony of lust and groaning. A suction creates people
gasping for breath.

Anyone enters this scene like a ghost or a river or a distant
planet: with the motion of breathing creating a body. A body to
paw the air. To hang my teeth and lips from other bodies. To
climb through galaxies using only a snaking tongue. To make vapor
and to vaporize.

Friction is the commodity here. In every corner a trade is
made. Throughout the room: bargaining and buying, slavery and the
open giving of slavery. History widens, made complex in the heat.

The stars here pulsate with the warmth and odor of some new
dimension. Bodies. Stones. Loadstones. Philosophers' stones
turning honey and milk into semen. Each sequence, every meta-
morphosis, is charged with poetry, yet with a certain beautiful
and fatal completeness, avoids poetry like love.

Granite images and shadows grip each other powerfully as
scented flowers imprint upon the backs of shadows a message as
soft and heated as the droplets themselves. A message of ten-
derness and heat.

Inside
the spun plastic music's blatant gestures
thrust with a dense cloud of fumbling nerves
into the walls, swallowed mostly
by empty spaces called insulation.
By the time what's left gets out here
where the iced moon
makes daring shadows
across bone stillness,
There actually is a choice.

—Ted Clausen

THE STEEL-TOED KISS

We are being withdrawn from issue,
We heroes and saints—
And our lovers,
Divisions of night troopers,
Are bending us to kneel—
Obedient crusaders
Of an adoring art—
But it is our whorish smiles
We see mirrored in their boot-tops.

—Harry Blaisdell

the winds carry soft moan
while milky liquid pours
across thighs
across the sand
across my stomach
hits the blue sky
and swaying eucalyptus

done
your cock rests
between my thighs
holding
a golden curve

Michael Cullen

Throaty cries and the whispers of sudden children, whispers
like the hissing of snakes, smoothe the air.

A single man leans hard against the walls of heaven, his
hands tight on his thighs. He moves, his eyes move with an
abandon that almost betrays his control. His little deception
awakens and sustains in him a legion. Angels strut and spin in
the mist.

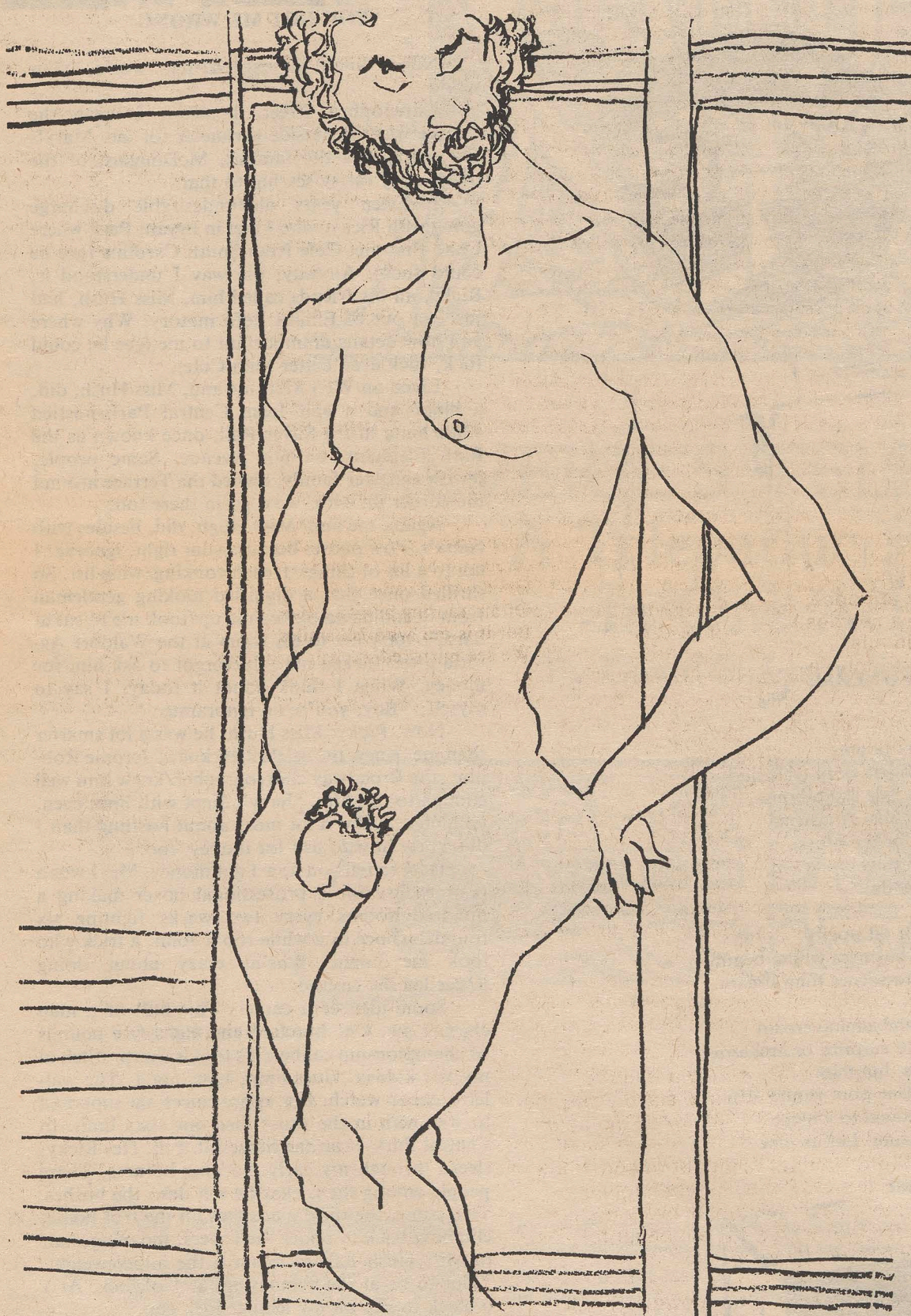
A cooling wind signals impending extinction. A final defiant
longing expands in each breast. A moaning breathing creates a
chain of men in the darkness. Eyes roll back in their sockets to
watch for the first glimmer of thought. Bodies hug tightly together
awaiting the stiletto dawn.

— Bill Mitchell, 1978

LIKE A ROLLING STONE
(For Jon Landau)

She's gone away, and who's to go and get her?
She's spent her quarters on a thing called Hope.
She will come back, if only you will let her—
but careful now, here comes the antelope
of Death, prepared for dancing on her sweater,
and clinging to December's horoscope.
I liked the picture, but the book was better,
and careful now—above her hangs Love's rope.

—Stuart Byron



LETTER TO DAVID

i've developed this twitch and my eyes are going
cold like silver i don't have your fine warm hammer
to knock me into life anymore
there is nothing going on here winter silences
even my dreams are but shadows now i am alone
in this cafe noir but still your dark
hands surround me some smoky breath spills
over me a black dick probes
my turbid core at the point of entry i
become the night

—Joe Whitney

JAZZMAN

Take the A train ride middle car shining
from afar rockaway w/the swing of any fitzgerald
w/the ride on tracks hear me sing like a wind
on these notes like high seas
take the A house in a white straw hat
take any helltown
where you scat down drains
and bop on sidestreets like you were anyone's friend

bridge that sound w/a highway of noise
w/brass and concrete
and w/a mutability that any coney island sister
can tell the difference

ah any sea will do tied in w/tide of brain
or any atlantic could you blow in on some beach
big as a whale but just a fish?

i am here and there w/black clarinet
and swing to bop skating to the place
where men wait in virginal dark-
skin and drum i flew *negro* to the town
where he takes it from the top
and this endless rehearsal for montreaux
for lausanne *nach bremen*

w/the jazzman on my back
django django
and then it comes out funk w/clavinet
w/all the conga sound north of 96 street
and that east river it's-a-breeze
any drum roll show your heart
any one will tell
how these latin nights go

w/the jazzman who swims away
nightly on a sea touching me
come together into the glow of a star
spotlight on brass
and silver metal
and i'm cued up before the doors of any birdland
and all the ghosts that hit my ears think i'll fly
silver and gold, jute and jade
on black on black and back and across
any streetwise man w/a horn in his hand.

—Brian Butterick

1st North American serial rights

Sitting in the mirror
reflecting on my nakedness,
I imagine myself
one of those chunky and beautiful
Michelangelical adolescents—
suspecting all the while
that all I have in common
with his marbles
is their weight.

—Mike Massing

BUD UNFURLED

You walk with the breath
that harvest carries above the stench
of dried summer beds,
whose tired residents
weave yellowed cocoons.

A seed to my inward earth
unravels beneath translucent leaves.
(Cast off promise had propagated doubt.
Those thin imitation fell from their heritage
tasseled with the word
I've heard others abuse.)

The mockery of the verse dances in my head.
I fear I brush a spectre's dreaded dream
once safe through distance.
To touch you I am poised above the drift
Tripping in the skirts of my other dancer's season.
Swallowed of earth, I stand your ground
with unbent head

framed in the latticework of shadow
heightened by the word ignited by silence
the noise fades images flare
I see myself.

Richard Ballen

A POEM FOR JOHN WEINERS

I

north beach is
alive and dreaming
in the second year
of drought

grey faces of buildings
scream aloud
so that only i
hear them

(it's six in the morning)

philip lamantia sleeps
thirty feet from my kitchen
in a room cluttered
with the surreal

five blocks away
ferlinghetti sits
in his house of grained marble

in the room down the hall
(of a three room apartment)
bobby sleeps
my lover
in a bed
of soft nails

i've been careful
not to awaken him

II

i've read your poem for painters
(just now for the ninth time)

for me
it is the meat of chaim soutine
and the screeching hollow
of edvard munch

i'll take a cargo of paintings
caused by closing the eyes
and creating canvases on eyelids

(try it after crying
to the sun)

III

did you know columbus avenue
when he dressed-up in an arab robe?

or telegraph hill
crowned in egyptian jewelry?
i take my place
among empty milk cartons
and two scrambled eggs
of this morning

my father's friend
luke gibney
is dead

you knew him?

he poured the drinks
at vesuvio's

and henri lenoir
sits in his rooms
devouring memories
of old north beach

'yes! yes! yes!!
there was (and is) a bohemian life'

even apollinaire admitted the sun
into his body

(especially apollinaire)

'a bohemian is carefree'

IV

north beach is
alive and dreaming
with his hands of black & white
and his throat of long shadows

he has three trees
in a park of four corners

one for you

one for me

one for our brother

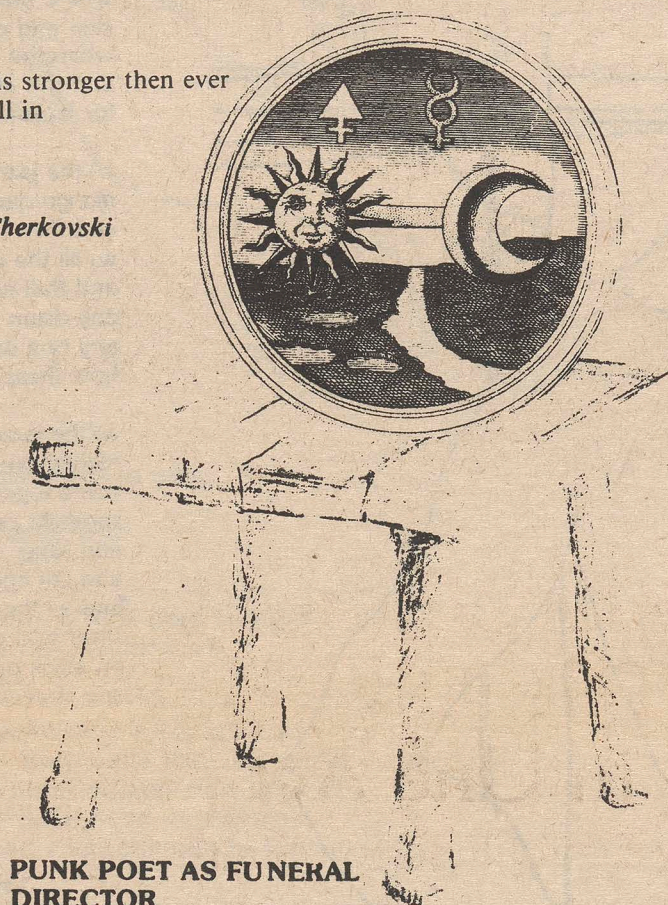
V

the morning buses swarm now
into the financial district

transamerica
exclimates
the sky

but coit tower is stronger then ever
on telegraph hill in
north beach
18 july '77

Neeli Cherkovski



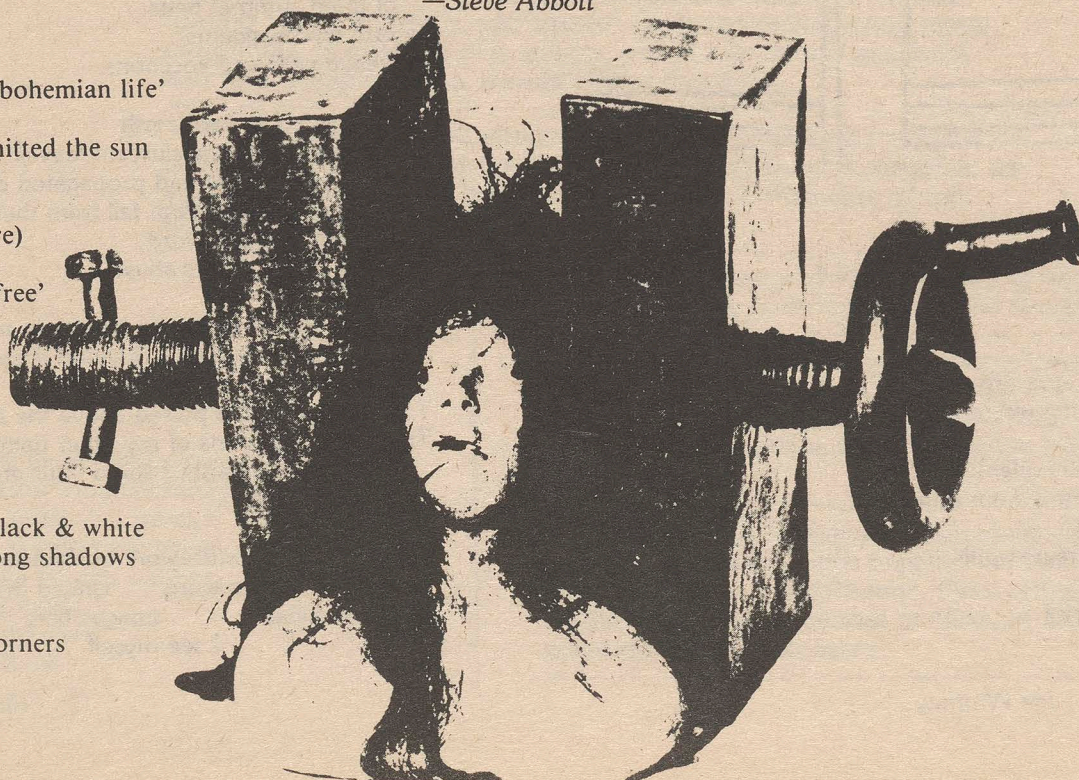
PUNK POET AS FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Each time I write sex poems
my lonely riddled fingers ooze with sludge.
Long hair invariably falls like a bruise
vomiting a mass of curls. A novena
of aching eyes is lit for the Muse
& Donatello's David runs amuk
like Frankenstein's Bride.

Maybe I should leave off poetry,
go into the funeral business where beauty
sprawls on slabs more secure than dream.

Emotion fixed with embalming cream
would be less likely to surprize or embarrass
me in front of friends, but then
some other necrophiliac poet would arise,
grin a leer of lust & kneel to whine:
"O let us prey on beauty. Let us dine."

—Steve Abbott



YOU GOT ME WRONG

Never knew it existed/that world, your world.

Christopher Street, I mean. I mean the Village was the outside perimeter for me. Mary's Bar, sure, and the famous, McDougals, of the queer artsy fartsy set/hip to that.

Eighteen years old/undesirable discharge going with Ricky, who I met in Bryant Park where I had first met Cole from South Carolina (gee he could fuck). Anyway, the way I understood it, Ricky, all his friends called him, Miss Hush, had just got out of Elmira Reformatory. Why where and how details unimportant to me (gee he could fuck, fuck even better than Cole).

Lived on West 81st, me and, Miss Hush, did, a block and a half from Central Park/hustled 42nd/hung in the Silver Rail, once known as the Pink Elephant, on 6th Avenue. Same people, jewish gangster family, owned the Terrace around the corner on 44th, we'd go in there too.

Again, me and, Miss Hugh, did, besides with coma's, slow pauses because your right, ignorant I am to a lot of things/french cooking/wine list. So thrilled once that a dignified looking gentleman from Scandinavia picked me up/took me to eat at Sardi's/took me to his room at the Waldorf Astoria after/fucked me silly/forgot to ask him for money. When I think about it today, I say to myself, "Boy, you're an ignoramus."

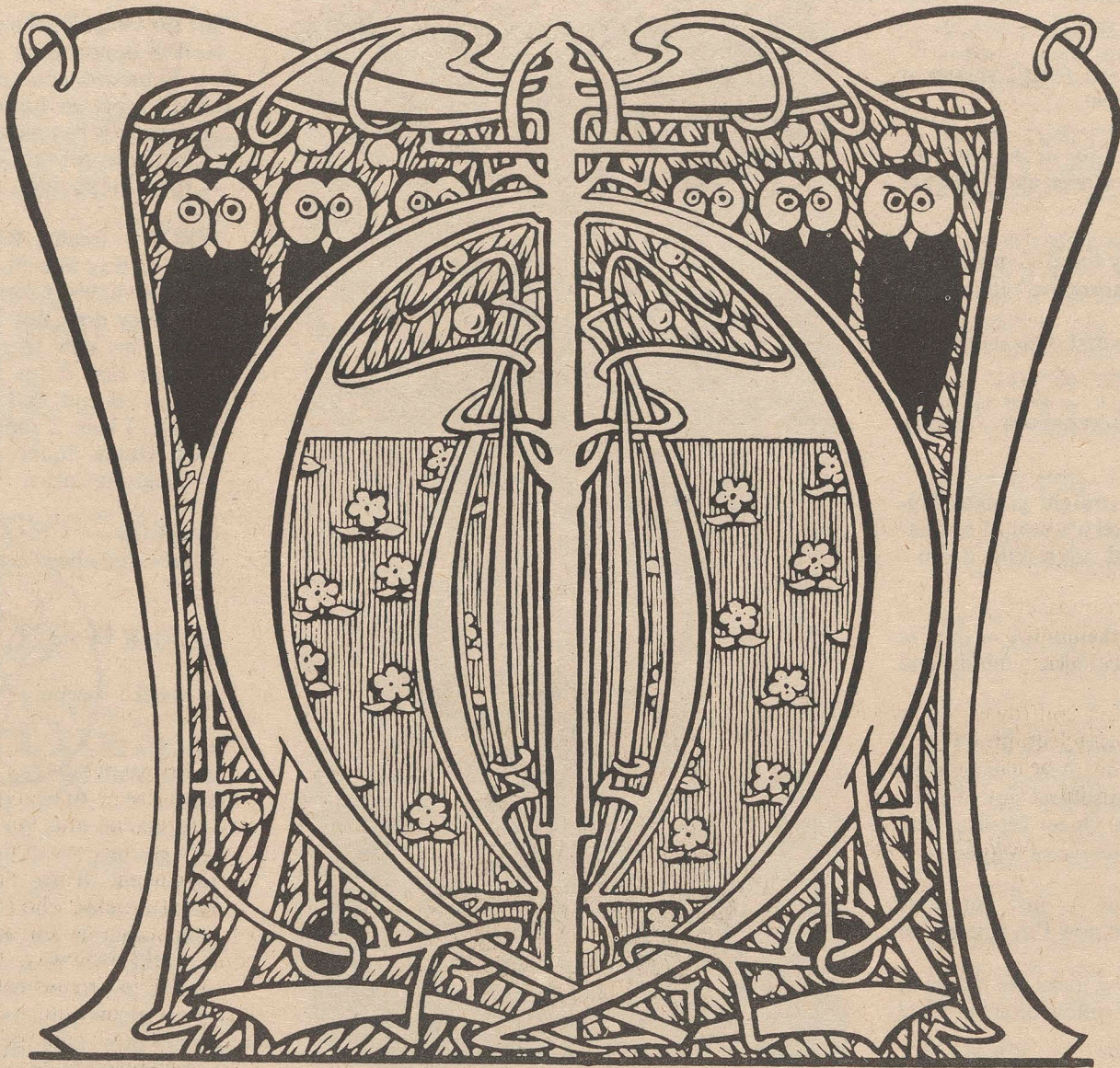
Now, Ricky. Miss Hush, he was a lot smarter than me. Knew the celebrities/knew, Jerome Robbins, the Broadway choreographer/knew him well enough to call him, 'Jerry'. Slept with him, even, he hinted. Knew a lot more about hustling than I did/knew how to ask for money, too.

Hate to tell you how I got money. Me, I was a poor excuse for a professional boxer making a hundred dollars every two weeks fighting six rounders/once in a while rob a John, a trick who took me home. Was'nt crazy about doing it/needed the cash.

Some idea of a career. This bull of a man chasing me. One hundred and eightyfive pounds of championship caliber/his tool is sharp/stitch in my left kidney. Goes limp, him, not I. The wallet/a cheap watch. For appearances am supposed to stay with in the proscribed one sixty limit. In Central Park I run the horseshit trail. He, Ricky, sleeps through my early morning hotness. Three people among the rocks/the wet dew, the bushes. Two come, the third ejaculates on the trot home, climbing back in under the covers, moaning, half to Miss Hush/half to himself, the middleweight, "Got to be at the gymnasium at 1 o'clock. At 1 o'clock to slip on my leather jock cup."

First recognition/got in Scranton boxing a monstrous six foot four white guy. Took the hollering crowd in, I did with my style. Fact was/never landed a clean punch/white guy kept tripping over his own feet/then, crashing to the canvass covered wood. The whole arena seemed to shake when he fell. I think/unzipped his fly/nice one/jaw hung slack/crumpled, didn't know what was coming/didn't have a chance. No never felt sorry for them/never thought about it, one way or the other/had to eat/had to make a living. Came home drunk as usual, Ricky, Miss Hush, screaming, "You don't love me! You don't! You don't love me!" Smashing vases against the wall/swinging lamps aimed at my head. Suck my toes first/ass second/cock third, by that time he'd have his fingers fucking me. Next he'd order me to turn over/spit on me/shove his huge cock in to me. Sure I loved him. Our neighbors. I worried about what the neighbors would think when they heard all the noise coming from our apartment.

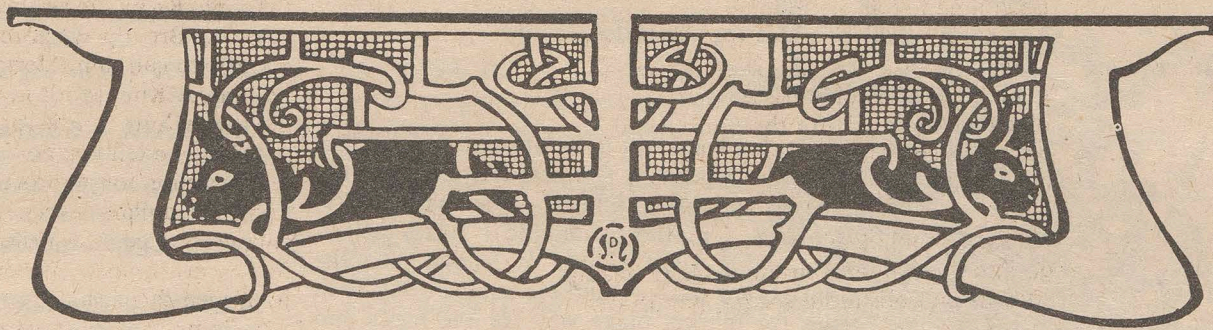
Freddie Greenfield



REVERIE'S TELECAST

A Telepathic Play In One Act

By David Emerson Smith



Reference and Background Information

The scenes that take place on Polk Street/SF are based on my personal experience of factual events that took place September 77//There are several events that led to a showdown between hustlers and merchants//In the summer the SF Police Dept in cooperation with a couple of TV stations decided to clean up the Tenderloin (similar to Boston's Combat Zone)//This action inevitably forced drug traffic to North Beach and primarily to Polk Street//Again the police encouraged by a TV expose on Polk/moved in with the pretense of cleaning up the drug traffic but found it easier to bust street people and hustlers for victimless crimes//The merchants afraid of the bad publicity/grouped and went to Gains falsely claiming that street people and hustlers (mostly young fags) were ruining their business//In one week/the pigs arrested almost anyone who was standing in front of a business/ (a newly enforced city ordinance)/they arrested anyone who was not moving//

The street people and hustlers organized and picketed the businesses responsible for calling in the pigs/they carried signs/(vote with your feet/stay in the street)/leafleted and chanted into the night//It was an amazing happening/as far as I know/it was the first time such a traditionally transient/fragmented social group organized/demonstrated and were temporarily successful in getting the merchants and pigs off their case/a case of victimless crime//

Nito Buritos is a fast food pseudo mexican restaurant located on Polk Street/it is a favorite meeting place for hustler and street people//

The House of Harmony is a bar on Polk Street where hustlers and clients meet and negotiate/theoretically the bar extends to the street and sidewalk skirting it as a great number of young hustlers are legally too young to enter the bar//

Gains is chief of police in SF//

A Dedicative Prologue to Robert- and Peter

Breaking in an early morning fog
I find myself enveloped in/one that longs
grieves because I do not have everything
all my loves bathing/creating/playing by my side
they are my strength and my vision
without them I fail to glow
so I offer these words
and let them flow
to Boston Massachusetts
and San Francisco

SCENE I

Michael/ David/ Tommy/ José and Jesus standing in front of Nito Buritos on Polk Street

A straight youth from Daly City leans out the window of his Chevy/ waving a beer can/yells/are you a Bicentennial Fag?

TOMMY — (replies disarmingly loud) — not bicentennial but I am a Fag — Fascinating, isn't it!!!

MICHAEL — We are your worst fear and your greatest fantasy//

JESUS — Desear esta muchacho caballero/ (turning to David) Qué Tal?

DAVID — They're just some straight gringos fag-baiting-kill a queer for Christ/hell it's part of our national heritage/ just some good fun passed down from father to son//

MICHAEL — they're afraid of themselves — they're cut off from their feelings/circumcised minds and emotions//

DAVID — they drive up and down Polk Street casting words from the security of their heavy steel boxes/ afraid to get out of themselves/ out of their cars/afraid they might catch the Queer flu-lisps and limp wrists for days — — — (everyone laughs)

MICHAEL — it's true/it's true — just got these wrists out of a cast last week/and now I'm a new man

TOMMY — all those Fag Beating jocks are hiding in their locker/all those tight assed pillow biters are just dying for a cock/

MICHAEL — they can see we don't just dream and booze/we're hot/horney and free/ we don't just cruise//

JESUS — Putos Y Putas seimpre-caverones!!! (he pauses/reflects for a moment and continues . . .) Machismo es muy Malo

JOSÉ — hell macho/if they don't know their mind/I ain't got the time//

TOMMY — anybody got the time/

MICHAEL — Your place or mine/

TOMMY — seriously — — I'm suppose to meet my new sugar daddy at ten/

MICHAEL — sweet sixteen and never been

DAVID — sweet dreams . . .

TOMMY — vamos amigos/

DAVID — watch out — the street is filthy with cars tonight

(Tommy, Michael, David exit, leaving José & Jesus)

SCENE II

Jesus and Jose are having coffee at Nito Buritos

JESUS — José, I'm worried about Carlos/he's been so depressed lately/he doesn't understand/

JOSÉ — understand what?

JESUS — he doesn't understand why I came to Amerika/he doesn't understand what I write and the poetry of lives along our street/he doesn't understand that struggling to survive kills poetry and art/ kills the reason to go on

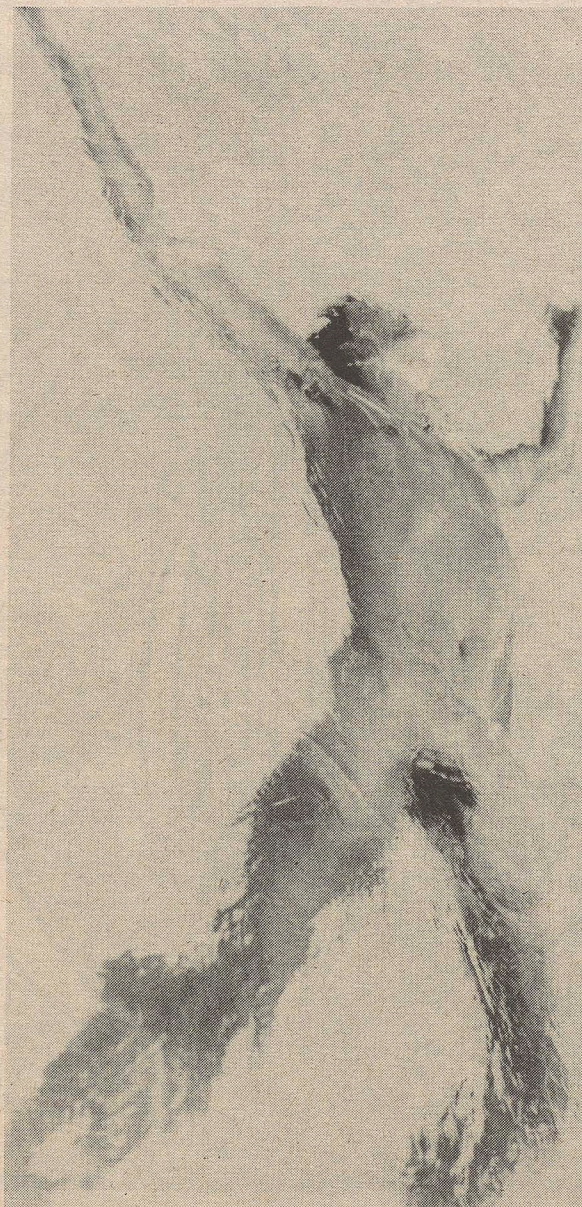
JOSÉ — in Mexico?

JESUS — I love my homeland but fear its fascist workings — I fear the way it contorts the artist — smothers art and poetry

JOSÉ — I don't understand

JESUS — Carlos is locked in/all the sculptures he has done in the last three years have been done in someone else's name/Carlos/works in an art factory/That is — all the art he produces/except for a few pieces he does at his apartment/are engraved/ signed by his boss/

JOSÉ — he gets no credit



JESUS — he is prevented from going on his own/if he tries his work will be blackballed/he will not be able to get his art into any gallery/he is convinced that servitude and artistic prostitution are preferable to starvation//

JOSÉ — Si, we're all turnin' a trick

JESUS — that's just it/hustlin' and my friends here lift me/make it possible to write through it/ I don't have to be a slave/I'm real/I've the freedom and time to craft the lines that run along our outstretched arms/

JOSÉ — will you go back to Carlos — someday

JESUS — I'm not sure/I don't know. . . .

SCENE III

Carlos is having breakfast in an obscure little restaurant in Tonalá/Jalisco — The people are busy in the street — students off to school — merchants carrying their wares — mothers shopping — buses clattering and spewing giant clouds of smoke into the restaurant as they pass — donkeys loaded down with vegetables for market make way for the buses and people//

Jesus is in a half lit furnished room in the Tenderloin/San Francisco — lying in bed thinking about Carlos and his misadventures as a recent illegal alien who is struggling to survive/Jesus has been a male prostitute for the two months he has been in S.F. — He is street wise and weary — weary with lost love — having left love for the states and the gold it glows of. . . .

JESUS — Carlos?

CARLOS — (flies buzz aimlessly about his head — he swats them unconsciously as a cow would with her tail) Oh Jesus — I received your letter yesterday — my work has been going slow — it is you that I am always sculpting — even when birds/butterflies and fish present themselves freely and unattended at the touch of my eyes and fingers/I sculpt your passionate shoulder into a bird — your solid firm ass into a horn of plenty — your magical prick into a mackerel — your smile into a butterfly//

JESUS — Dear Carlos — you tell me your work is going slow — your heart/a horn of plenty is tumbling images on the foot of my bed — (the light strains through a streaked translucent window) — the dim light dances across my face/I hold you solid straddling me — watching the light flash fish/butterflies and birds — Oh the words — each poem I write — each song I sigh is held together by your muscles — bones and thighs — you are the sinew in my breath//

CARLOS — LOST IN A FOREIGN LAND — the land of presidents/ millionaires and slaves/lost in your syllables/entangled in your words/entrapped in your phrases — I told you it wouldn't be easy/you've

left the land of poetry for the land of success/for the land of opportunity — you left me and the hardness we embraced/your people/the poetry of our race/ what's more we both are poorer in this vacuum our separateness has sucked us into — it isn't you I blame — its the words that has filled your dreams with folly — the fakir poetry//

JESUS — tread softly — be kind — our poetry still finds its way into my lines — we still make love because we haven't forgotten art/the streets are not art — money does not forge my poems but the love I make - my new friends are giving me courage — a courage that oozes from asphalt/ from the young gays — proud and courageous — they make me strong/ I hear a song in their stance and movement from Union Square to Polk Street. . . (he smiles longingly at Carlos)

CARLOS — I forgive you in the image we sculpt intertwined about early mornings greet with love

SCENE IV

Michael is working the street

MICHAEL (self thoughts) — (posing for possible clients:) Walking and stance that knowing cocksure glance that blows them away/the side-walks sinks into me/anchors me from flight/romance and reckless gestures/Walking the streets/round and round they wind til the right fantasy holds them fast/at last/emptying wallets and groping for the stars// some want it for nothing/at three or four in the morning they're good for a ride to the ghetto/but you've got to let them know you mean business/not just some empty tube of toothpaste/say you want my come then take what you're after and leave the twenties on the dresser/Wake up/wake up you've got to go home tonight/suburbanite wife with seven up kids doesn't even have a dildoe/flim/flam business man (client approaches)

(client approaches on foot — cruising side glances while pretending to look in a shop window)

MICHAEL — Hi, what's happening?

CLIENT — Nothing/just window shopping

MICHAEL — I noticed (smiles)

CLIENT — (smiles) are you free tonight

MICHAEL — no — strictly cash and carry — till the end of the month/ and I've got to pay my rent/

CLIENT — how big's your cock/son?

MICHAEL — 6 and a half inches — hard

CLIENT — what do you do?

MICHAEL — that depends/

CLIENT — depends?

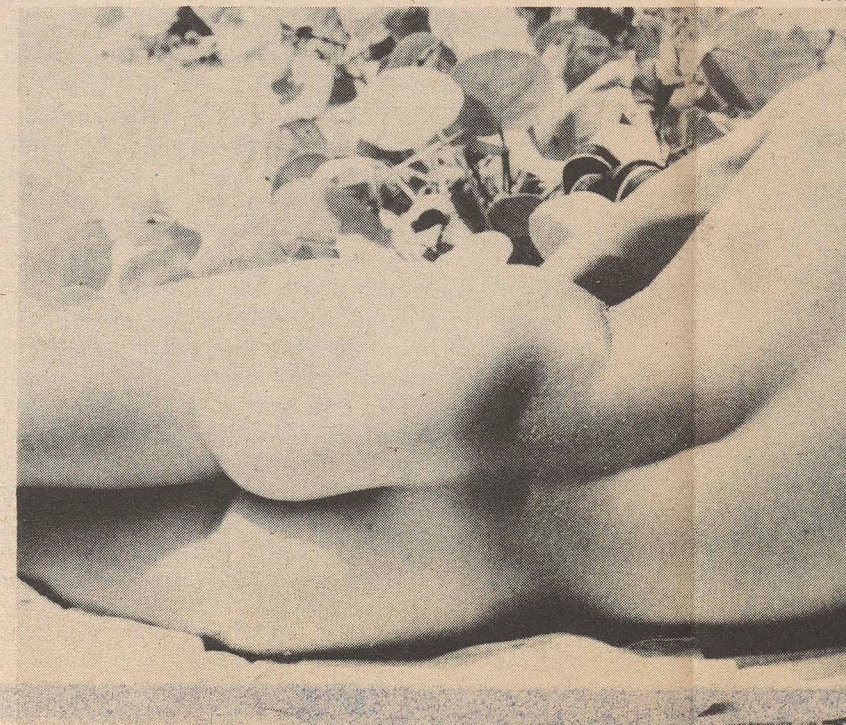
MICHAEL — it depends on what you pay

CLIENT - DO YOU TAKE CHECKS?

MICHAEL — I don't make love on lay-away/if you want this boy you'll have to pay

CLIENT — thirty — to suck you off

MICHAEL — you're on — (exit with client)



SCENE V

Jesus enters to the front of Nito Burito on Polk Street — watching for clients and pigs — a confident smile and cocksure glance embellish his features/ he lights a cigarette/the street pours images over him — he is momentarily enveloped — lost in reverie's telecast//

JESUS — Carlos — Polk Street is shifting at my feet
I inhale smoke then see you smile sad
and gently take another drag
the boys you are — walk by so fair
men erect with flowing hair
fags and fairys fill the air
I see you there at work
smothered in the sweet scent of despair
do you hear them/sigh
lovely men/strolling smiles by
I see you in their darkened eyes
I see you in their motion/hand on hip
they tell the story love complete
from day to day along the street
a new and never ending tale is told
the folds of skin their contours hold
I draw you Carlos to my breast
the poetry of bodies rest
held firmly in the tenderloins
the dollars/cadillacs and men
move me motionless from bed to bed
our naked love within my head

(a man enters and asks "are you working"/Jesus grins-laughes and they walk off)

CARLOS — (makes a quick reply as they walk off)
I've etched the final line/I'm glad your words are so final and secure/I sleep with you tonight — they'll never see us making love — we are invincible-invisible/I am finished — It is late — I sculpt a final love and patiently wait//

SCENE VI

Carlos is restlessly tossing in bed/he can't sleep so he turns the light on and sits up in bed/exhausted/

Jesus has been arrested and is being interrogated at the police station/

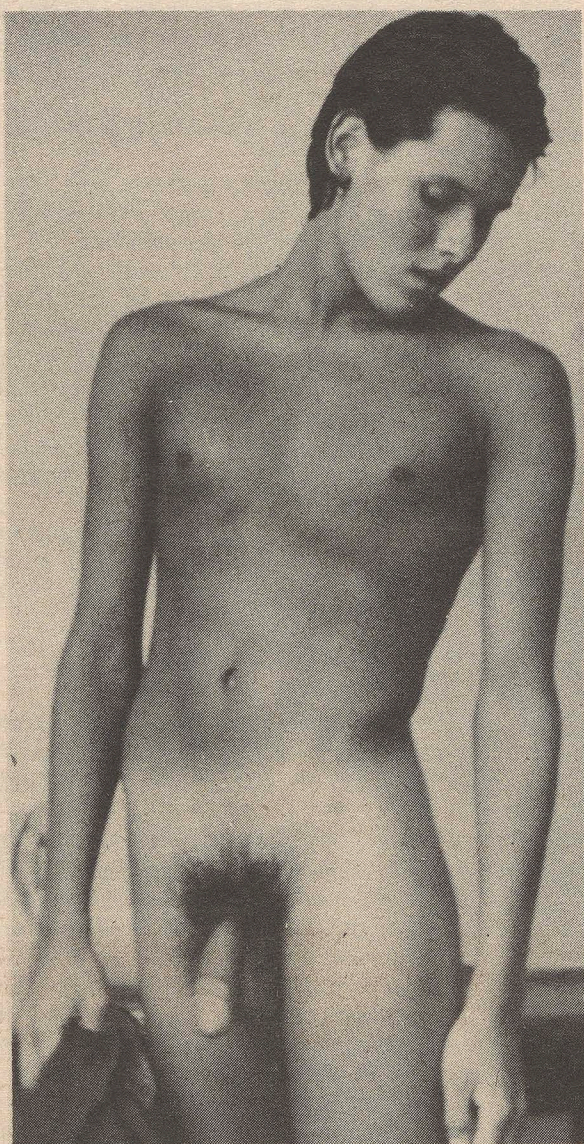
CARLOS — Jesus — where are you — the bed is cold — my heart is racing — my head is aching — I sense you are in desperate trouble — your dream land a mirage — I see a fool's gold/my love you're lost to me tonight — I feel a black shawl/a veil of sadness fall on you and I am lost in that knowledge//

1ST OFFICER — (arresting plain clothes pig addressing one other pig) he doesn't speak much English — he didn't know he was being arrested 'til I flashed my badge/ he froze-scared shitless/

2ND OFFICER — (to Jesus) — okay Amigo — where you from — don't act dumb now — (raising his hand in a threatening manner — Jesus tenses then lowers his head into his hands/

1ST OFFICER — Hey hombre — what's ya bag — ya like boys — huh — are you a fag/

2ND OFFICER — (positions a bulge in his pants — unconsciously plays with himself) (to the arresting officer) let's have a little fun/ lock the door (with a wink) so we're not disturbed/



1ST OFFICER — (to Jesus) you got some lovely hot buns there/mind if we butter them/how 'bout a little action lover boy/how 'bout satisfying some real men for a change

JESUS — No comprendo — no-por favor-no

2ND OFFICER — (brandishes a nightstick in Jesus' face) You'll understand — either you let us fuck you or (indicates with a forward upper thrust of the nightstick) or we're going to shove this long black beauty up your ass — (pauses-grins) I think you're starting to understand/I think you understand more than you let on//
JESUS — no—I don't know if I can

1ST OFFICER — Ain't no ifs about it — we're not going to hurt you/ just a little legal B & E in your ASS/ plain and simple

2ND OFFICER — (he grabs Jesus by the hair — pulls him to a kneeling position before him — he pulls his fly down and motions for Jesus to suck him — you're going to suck us first/make us hard then we're going to fuck the shit out of you (lights go down)

SCENE VII

Jesus is thrown into the drunk tank — he is deliberately tripped and sprawls in the center of a group of bantering drunks)

FIRST DRUNK — (helping Jesus off the floor) Fuckin' Sadists — bad enough ya got a blind hang-over — then they kick ya in the head — (gets Jesus on his feet) spare a cigarette?

JESUS — (shaking his head) — No hay cigarros. . . .

SECOND DRUNK — (an elegant aged bum in a worn out salvation army uniform/decorated and tattered/walks gingerly to Jesus & handily flicks a cigarette into Jesus' mouth and lights it) — Let me present myself — I'm the honorary mayor of this hamlet — my citizenry is a good natured and motley group of has beens/could have beens and shiftless drifters//

THIRD DRUNK — wakes up and mumbles — who's got my bottle — where am I?

SECOND DRUNK — (in a clever dance step he addresses the third drunk) — good evening sir — welcome to the municipal hotel — (bowing with a flourish) — you're in bum's heaven, it's a pleasure to accommodate you/let me show you to your room — we have all the modern conveniences/a simple but elegant chamber pot — set in the classic surroundings

of steel and stone/though I'm afraid sir the maid and butler are presently visiting relatives in the south of France/

THIRD DRUNK — why don't you shut the fuck up and let a bloody bloke die — how can a guy sleep with such a loudmouff bullshit bum around/

SECOND DRUNK — (ignoring the criticism he addresses a new arrival) — Ah-another guest has arrived — I'm sorry but we're all booked/(pause for laughter) — you might try the fifth precinct — north beach is so lovely this time of year// (general laughter and argument fill the dank air — Jesus does not understand the humor — he slinks into a corner and disappears into his thoughts)//

SCENE VIII

Jesus addresses Carlos from his dark perch outside the circle of drunks/

JESUS — Where are you love/eclipsed love hidden in the shadows (he peers intently into the darkness) The air heaves with your breath — I'd recognize it anywhere — the lilac love drifts to me through the dank atmosphere — your honeysuckle sweetness fills me with an enormous sensory banquet — the others surely must sense/smell and taste you too — I dare not look their way/ have you left already/ did you come here in disguise to prepare our love bed — did you make it through black halls of rape/through the labyrinth of doors/clang shut/ to fluff our pillow/ pull the covers back/an invitation for our love/an amazing feast for our starved affections (suddenly a bouquet of lilacs and honey suckle appear in Jesus' outstretched hands)

CARLOS — I send flowers to ease your pain tonight/to help you through the forced terror of your horrid plight/I send a sculpture of our love — our love breathes your dank air — the fragrant love we shared beneath the waterfall at the river's edge/flowers shower us in our crystal pool beneath the falling water. The sculpture no longer lets me form its structure — it becomes us — both poet and sculptor — it sculpts us a flowering poem//

JESUS — this miracle your sculpture sculpts — this phallic wreath soothes me and gently sucks — it is the rub of love/

CARLOS — My horn of plenty has given us this miracle — lilacs mingle honeysuckle through me too/

JESUS — our lilac/honeysuckle scented love permeates the cell and the entire jail as well — and no one seems to notice//

SCENE IX

Michael, David and Tommy — three hustlers in from Nito Buritos

TOMMY — where's carmen miranda/cha cha feels tonight

MICHAEL — Jesus? he was in Nito Buritos an hour ago — said he had to turn a trick tonight — behind on his rep//

DAVID — (walks up) Jesus? he just got into an unmarked pig car — I was across the street and didn't have time to warn him//

MICHAEL — these merchants got it out for us — they're conspiring with Gain to get rid of us — 20 busted already/we ain't harmin' no one//

DAVID — we attract business/ we bring them in and they can't get enough of us (takes a sexy pose) (pauses — pays to advertise/

MICHAEL — what's the difference between a gay and straight business man?

TOMMY — different credit card numbers?

MICHAEL — yes and the gay has the color coordinated toilette paper/because he's so sensitive and artsy/

TOMMY — Yeah — they think that coming out of their closet means opening their front door each morning.

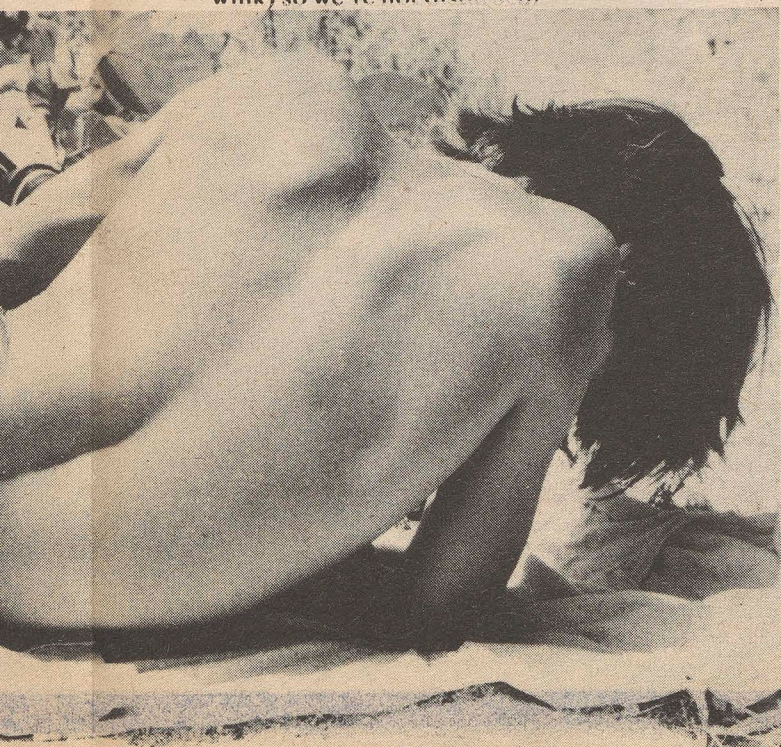
MICHAEL — and closing the door on us — locking us away in their fantasy torture chamber . . .

DAVID — I got busted last week when a man walking his poodle had me arrested for loitering/indecent exposure and disturbing the peace/

TOMMY — how were you disturbing the peace?

DAVID — He complained about me pissing on the Bank of America building/so I turned and pissed on his poodle/boy was he pissed (laughter)

MICHAEL — SERIOUSLY THOUGH — if I get busted one more time they'll send me home to Nevada/ to my parents/ to that hell hoe/ I'd rather live on Alcatraz



photos by Michael Thompson

TOMMY — us girls provide a service — what da ya think this traffic jam is all about — look at em — gawking closet fairy businessmen — hey you — you're too homely/ya better be rich — 'cause I'm a hot and horny little bitch/

DAVID — Hell — whole family's come with their picnic lunches/Polk Street is the most interesting place in this tired town — and we're the most interesting people on Polk - (mimicking) - look ma — look at all the sissys ——— you've read about us — seen us on TV — now here we are in the hot flesh — so eat ya hearts out — (everyone laughs) — spare a cigarette (Tommy offers everyone a cigarette)

SCENE X

Michael/ David/ Tommy and José at Nito Buritos//

MICHAEL — hey José — psst — over here/

JOSÉ — Que Pasa?

MICHAEL — got anything for the head?

JOSÉ — nada — what's wrong?

MICHAEL — I think Jesus just got popped — David saw him get into an unmarked pig car out front/

JOSÉ — shit — are you sure?

DAVID — yeah — that pig's been busting everyone — that son of a bitch got Nicky last night/

TOMMY — these streets aren't safe for no proper lady — they're taking advantage of us girls — has he got ID/

JOSÉ — no ——— I told him to get a phony social security number — I even offered to set it up for him but he kept putting it off/ now he's ——— he's a dreamy poet always drifting off/

DAVID — he told me he hired a guide/ a coyote who guided him up into Arizona — always just one step ahead of immigrations and the Ku Klux Klan — the Klan figures it's a Mexican conspiracy — an invasion/

MICHAEL — I'm worried — he's a sweetheart/

TOMMY — Hell sweet — he's hot — plain and simple!!!!

MICHAEL — I'm going to miss that tacky whore/

DAVID — Did ya know that this is one of the places that called the pigs in on us/we spend our hard earned dollars here — hustlin' our asses on the street and they call in the pigs//we should boycott this toilette/

JOSÉ — I'm with you all the way/

TOMMY — you ain't never told a lie/

MICHAEL — where will we go/

TOMMY — to the streets honey — to the streets ——— come on girls!!! (everyone together) — to the streets! ! ! (Tommy swishes out singing) — I'm just a sweet transvestite from transexual transylvania ——— (an instrumental version of Bob Marley and The Wailers — "Get Up, Stand Up, Stand Up For Your Rights")

SCENE XI

It's after two/the bars are closed/a large group of hustlers have gathered out front of Nito Buritos//

MICHAEL — (to a group of hustlers and street people) David/José and Tommy think we could get these merchants off our backs/ hit them in the pocket book — in the purse/where it hurts/we could boycott their ass//

STREET PERSON ONE — Fuck you and your political boycotts/I'm looking out for number one/for my own ass// (pause) — hey ——— anybody want some ludes (transactions take place in a busy huddle)

STREET PERSON TWO — Everybody must stay stoned 'cause there's a man in a coon skin cap that wants an eleven dollar bill and you only got ten

TOMMY — the pigs want to keep us stoned — that way we're easier to push around/easier to control/ I've had it — I ain't running no more — I ain't movin' from our street and I ain't hidin' from no law//

STREET PERSON ONE — Michael — you still wanta cop some ludes — it's first come first serve/ & there's only a few left/

MICHAEL — on second thought I think I want to be on the NATCH (natural) for this one

TOMMY — it's the only choice we have left — we're up against the wall — they'll never expect it/& they won't know what hit them — let's hear it for people power/

MICHAEL — sounds righteous to me/

DAVID — everyone is sick & tired of being pushed around — up and down our street — in and out of jail/

JOSÉ — el pueblo unido jamás será vencido — (he starts a chant) the people united will never be defeated ——— the people united will never be defeated

MICHAEL — it ain't just us faggots — they been coming down on everyone/ what about Yerba Buena and the I-Hotel/

DAVID — Yeah — they drove thousands of third world poor/gays and elderly from Yerba Buena/ tore down the hotels and tenements that so many called home and replaced them with a vacant desert of rubble/ as a public service/

MICHAEL — speaking of public service — after years of liberal rhetoric concerning the I-Hotel/ our hero — Hongisto personally evicted the elderly and poor — he personally swung the sledge hammer splintering doors and spirits/

DAVID — so much for quality low cost housing — the poor are negotiable/

JOSÉ — I ain't never waiting in no welfare lines no more — \$98 a month — I'd rather be a whore/ at least I got class — i'm peddlin' my own ass/

MICHAEL — we're up against the wall — either ya stand up for your rights or ya keep on running ——— its our street and I ain't movin'/(general approval and "right ons") — this one's for Jesus!! (everyone in unison repeats "this one's for Jesus!!!!")

TOMMY — Drag queens held stonewall — us girls gonna hold the street ——— our street (everyone begins to chant) — the people united will never be defeated ————/

(a complete chorus of Bob Marley & the Wailers doing "Get Up, Stand Up, Stand Up for Your Rights" — audience joins in singing — fades to final scene)

SCENE XIV

Jesus has been transferred to a private cell in another part of the jail where he is awaiting deportation lost once more in reverie's telecast — he addresses Carlos//

JESUS — Carlos — my words are useless now — my eloquence is unintelligible here — they treat me like a dog/an illegal alien ——— Black plague/hard rain/ horse flies swarming in my brain/my life and love are illegal — what's more — I'm a cosmic criminal — a universal outlaw/ my living and loving make me a criminal — my poetry makes me dangerous/ this government — these beauty killers — who rape the land — rape me — pillage my spirit — ransack my song —vandalize my love/my words should free me in this land of the free/ instead I am shackled by my rhyme — I'm lost and quickly running short of time———

CARLOS — Oh loving man — I feel great changes are at hand

pain cleanses

tincture of love heals

paragoric soothes

paragoric soothes

and permeates

your bittersweet fate

your future is

apparent

I am anxious and

tired

it is getting late

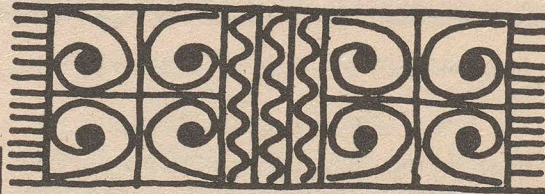
the fog is lifting from the land/the veil is replaced by flora and fauna/my sculpture is complete/

it is as powerful as your poem/ it will bring good fortune back home/my horn of plenty commands a feast — a lamb is sacrificed to the gods — Dionysus gives a command performance —/no effete adjective to delay/the love I'll hold from day to day/a love at home to stay//warmth glows beneath the sheets — I am hard for you — waiting to straddle you in flowers — embrace you and your fleeting word song/you couldn't deny your heart/your innermost part/n

now — I/my love/my horn sounds a clarion call to you in your prison — walled up in a foreign harrangue — prison walls embrace you for one night — and then I will replace the bars with solid arms/throbbing thighs/nocturnal sighs ————sweet love — see the fish/the birds/the butterfly/

JESUS — I've changed — you'll see/this government of the people is not — Carlos — I am dangerous — illegal — but not alien/I've grown erect wit vision and its song — I am/erect/a loving monument to the young outlaws of this land — denizens of the street where queer punks — gentle men and flaming faggots meet/I'll miss these friends and the street that accepted me/do not worry babe/morning will make the sun rise — cheer up sad artist — restless artisan/sleep-sleep-sleep-fall away/goodbye

Michael/David/Tommy and José//



TAILLIGHTS

Can I touch your heart thru your asshole?

spring night deep breath peculiar

in your hard-on

furry hurricanes

inanimate

— walks in a shadow blessed is the fruit of thy dick

some wild beating suddenly "puer natus est"

I fuck you off

twang

autumn farting

it is so good to be alive

I guess

on a spring day weather soda jerking

spiraling earth haven radiant

unimpaired skin

What kind of shit is this?

to it tits

rearing up

slowly move your legs apart

appearing And a galaxy dies

Your eyes betray the bag of your soul

burst love

I can't get a good shot of your asshole

up this close. It all blurs.

hairy nest

raped

beauty blue chromatic ego

for this my song

sour Monongahela

shit swiftly

'til I puke

Come on out of my head

to punch her touch in space hail stones

frozen lights on blinking

grasses icy

mean life - bulge soft zonked - out hole warm

tinted juice down there in up

snapped head masts

with only grief in the morning mists

pale my underpants

pine needles silver silence

crystal spheres delicate gravity

abiding

dry seed forever belly tight

seams scalding

creeping seeds unsurpassed delight

tiny tits crossing out words

dusk lover corpse bone

no willow night in December freeze

light musty toilet gurgling

pipes overflowing secretly wet notes

false sounds suck

in the moment of entwined airs

lit-up hurt

skin hood odor of the word

shooting liquid fire licking

leaf of lust

humming whirling enema soft

huge gaze ashes fuse

on his cold map she ticks indifferent

angel damn platinum milky

foul soul empty body breath

nothing rainy this night midnight still

coming

starry bleak all things fists rattling

inches devoured iridescence tinge

hog pussy blur feather imprint

burnt dangling hovering swung

jerkily into bottom of mouth

iris drops lovely basking

in brown

yearning horns stunted seeding red?

sacred everlasting harder light

secret within

appear released insight slipping

deluded muscle cave

breathing shrunk particular

dreams amber

wakes dank off

eerie

crannies light

Bob Zmuda

iron bars, joined ribs

for michael

he regards his fists around bars
that cage him against out here where i am:
those iron shadows, immovable, never argue,
they do not resist his curses, they only
change temperature, a little, when air
changes.

anything so close can't be entirely
alien: weren't they present when he decided
to make room inside himself? and didn't they
watch every time he made love
with cellmates or with surreptitious visitors?
did they ever snitch on him? were they just
indifferent? did they laugh when he curst
a guard? did they grin when that guard
picked up the fork out of sewage over-run
and laid it in his plate of food?

are his hands
fraternizing with the enemy every time he
holds those steel rods?

one day he will banish them
to a secret place in his soul: a tier of dim lights
he dare not forget: *i'll not give my body
to that keeper again, ever.*

and in that day, i
will see him; i will touch him, his flesh
will weep red with unbelief and need: he will
look at me and touch me, until snakes and birds
make love in our joined ribs.

an untamed god will
teach us to endure the agony of our closeness —
desert marigolds scorpions saguaro fruits!

will inman

POEM . . . TOO LATE

Gauguin painted your mother!
Not really, but the pregnant Tahitian
Looks like your mother,
And I kiss the reproduction of the swollen belly,
Knowing it is you beneath the purple dress,
Beneath the tawny skin.

It's a pretty sorry thing to loose your temper.
Especially when you cut a perfectly good print. . .
Worse when I think now I can't kiss you.

It's all right! We'll go to Tahiti,
And find your mother,
Find you whole, bodied, kissable. . .
Not merely a ripening mango in her hand.

—Maurice Kenny

OCTOPUS LOVER

I know the waltz ended with the backroom.
But, what's with romance?

Prematurely robbed? Or endangered instinct
Took flight in a darkened corner.

All the many hands.
Octopus lover, the sighless dim provides.

Tactile textures, a bland stand
Volleying balls on Court Jester.
Congratulations slobber at my knee — sight unseen.

What about a heart
A cross section of disparity.

Would you consider that?

In this ink well
Where I dwell.

Waiting for some
In-the-light lover
With a magnet in his pocket.

Attracting that which grows cold.

Ronald Lazard
1977



Trying to Rise from the Dead
(for Ron Schreiber)

It is snowing all over Easter Sunday,
I have no new bonnet, I do not care.

All the pictures on my bedroom wall
are artlessly crooked, & though I'm

anal compulsive, I'll not straighten them.

I want to talk with Ron, I want to sleep
with him all Easter Sunday afternoon. I

don't pick up the phone. The rooftops of Cambridge
look good to me. Sometimes the faces I see

down on the sidewalks scare me. Almost always lately
they scare me. Kids out for kicks. Fat white men

who look like maggots, Mr. Potato Head, look my
way
& say 'faggot', look my way & say 'jew'.

But here on the third floor up
Cleo Laine sings James Taylor songs,

& somewhere else, people are happy for Jesus.

Even the sound of cars — devastating new snow —
pleases me. My neighbor works on his house. I

pound with the sound of hammer on nails on wood.
He also plays piano, I like that even more

but it's all practice. And it's all hands.
I need hands right now, my own won't do. I want

to rise higher than the third floor. I want

to sing my own songs, & his, be grateful for he

who rises not thru miracles or magic or myth, but
thru circles I make for him with my own skin.

Walta Borawski



LET NO MAN BE CALLED BABY FACE

Getting the low-down on Billy Murphy. Mike Visconti hinted but Frank McDounagh told me he was Governor Devers boy. Grew up in Beverly. Hung around with the Kennedys. That's why when he was enroute to the Lexington, Kentucky drug hospital he stopped off in Washington, D.C. to visit with Jack the Senator who in turn made a telephone call to pave the way for VIP treatment.

First let me tell you the hospital was a hospital in name only. A minimum security federal prison for dope addicts, bebop musicians, gangsters, former professional athletes and faggots like myself, that's what it was. Attendants wore police uniforms and some, if I remember correctly, carried swinging batons. You arrive at the front gate of The United States Health Service Conglomerate located in the heart of the Blue Grass State. Leave your junk, if you have any left, with the officer wearing sun-tan-khaki/the hyperdermic needle/syringe/gun/knife. Life as one knows it on big city streets is momentarily suspended, held in abeyance. Doctor orders you to bend over/probes your rectum/nothing stashed in your tunnel of love but legal shit, you're now given a room. Sweat, snuffle, puke for better or worse, you're given a little medicine, when your cock starts getting hard you're cured.

You make new friends. He says, "I'm from Chicago. Where are you from?" — Tell him, "Boston." — He says, "Oh, you must know Baby Face." — Tell him, "Billy Murphy, yes I know him."

Mom was hooked, so was Dad. Pistol in my kick when I was twelve. Sucked my first prick when I was six. Took it in the rear at ten. Sick in jail at fifteen, deputy sheriff put me to work shoveling coal into the fiery mouth of the institution furnace. Tattooed myself with little pins dipped in indian ink. At night I'd masterbate, imagining I was under a blanket of stars.

Tex said, "Come on with me to Fort Worth." Someone else said, "Old lady's in the Jenny Barn."

Up from DC with a nickel. Dick on the Atlanta chain with a dime. Flea Fly on a goofball test in research. Roy Young playing contract bridge in the hospital with a fibulating heart. Little Red Riding Hood Rodney in the bandroom playing the trumpet. Miss Dayton Ohio the hairdresser married to Raymond Shalogh. Walter Winchell said, "Federal Governments running a country club down there." Barney Ross the ex-fighting marine checks in with opium fatigue. Old queans drop there pants for Camel cigarettes. Young males try getting off the natch smoking crushed up dried orange peel. Billy Murphy leaves.

Said to me, "Ran the Black Cat nightspot in Covington till the bartender from the Purple Mob out of Detroit got me hooked on Morphine." Said too, "I was a professional wrestler." I said, "There are many different positions, one I used to enjoy was taking a penis sideways, then when it was in I'd roll over on my stomach."

Give them a home where the Buffalo roam. Jewish doctor from Philadelphia told me he liked Demarol mostly, although/take anything in a pinch if it would do the trick. Helped relax me he explained/patients/hypocritical oaths to demanding on ones psyche. In a roundabout way this was said, sort of to rationalize the stigmata of being thrown in with a bunch of murdering thieves by the bureau of narcotics. Do I repeat myself. A nice Hebrew lad in the community becomes a physician, a respectable general practitioner. Shame/mortified/arrested. All my friends know. Can something like this be kept quiet? Any wrong move/any false hilarity suspect. You're no dummy, do you understand what I mean? Water underneath the bridge/overshoes/big puddles/another cup. Reason I like talking to you is because you're more intelligent than the rest.

II

Lots of farmers from rural southern towns come into the hospital, perplexed. Wondering, muttering to themselves, "Gosh darn it/what's this all about, Fred? Sheriff patted me on the back/said, "Fred, here's some papers and a Greyhound bus ticket, time you all got a cure."

Walter Reardon, Peggy his nickname was, the gambling broker from 44 Sullivan Street is here for a cure, talking quietly, "Things sure aint what like they used to be." That's the way the talk went if you were fifty or older and still using/nega-



tive/downhill complaints. "What the heck is this world coming to when even if you got the money, can't seem to connect for a decent ounce of horse. Shit, man, tell you twenty years ago, you young cocksuckers have no idea..." And we young cocksuckers would listen, awestruck, intrigued by these ritual reminiscences. Mouth agape, all wiggling ears atuned, "Smoked the pipe for pleasure with the Murder Incorporated Mob outta Brownsville on 7th Avenue in a dressmakers loft during prohibition." — "Hell, when Willy Ryan was a kid/strong as a bull/throw you out the window soon as look at you." — "Watch a Chinaman kick a habit, sonny/never hear a word/sit on his haunches/all the time/rock back and forth/chinaman know..." Or so they say, or so they say.

There are, dogs, cats, monkeys and homosapiens downstairs in Harry Izbells clinical laboratory under serveilence/being closely scrutinized to further the hunger pangs of science.

More talk. "Ten eight twenty?" — "What the hell is that?" — "Don't know what ten eight twenty is? Ten eight twenty is Harry Izbells formula of concentrated methadone/tried and true/his humble contribution to the humane society at large in the free world."

Canine dragging its ass/hind paws amputated seeks a fix through the bars of a cage. Siamese meow. Orangatans screech. Jack Sax by way of Coney Island looks at the clock, moans. It's that time again/alcohol, cotton swabs, deep kow tow-ing sighs of relief.

Willing participants, shit yes. Where else can you get pure heroin for not. On the street do you think? Answer that one? Of course there were strings attached down yonder. Trying out a new chemical antagonist called naline for the speedy withdrawal. You have to sign a paper, an agreement. In other words if need be someones not responsible for permanent damage to whatever it is you find couched in difficult reading matter. Sure they had an inmate library with all the best sellers available.

It would be a long time before I would become disillusioned with the hidden transplants about me who've lost the power of their penis, if it ever existed to start with except to pee, to pee in a private dungeon. Like Edgar Allen Poe bricking up a closet of pipe dreams. Like Pooh ??? / Fred wanting some seafood and honey.



III

You see, Baby Face Billy Murphy, had the key. Could sign out any time he pleased. Others doing criminal court time would sneer, whispering in my ear, "Goddamn winder."

Winders made up two thirds of the general count of moving bodies in the corridors between steel barred gates moving to and fro. Cold weather, snow on the ground up north, the heavy influx begins, "Goddamn winders come in hibernating for the winter."

On the shakedown of a hard long life. Spanish Harlem heroin for a hundred and twentyfive/seventy something if you knew the connection personally. I mean teeny weeny, this room we got, me and my partner, behind the stairwell of a four story duplex in the nineties off of Amsterdam Avenue/with the burnt cap of a wine bottle held with a bobby pin/three safetyfirst book matches lit and the cotton is filthy, "Don't worry, man, Chico, he be right back soon." — "I said did'nt you hear me? Maybe he took the money maybe to take the train, maybe. Maybe to wind in/you know, never can tell."

The way he had it figured out. He had it figured out he would stay thirty days/cut down to nothing, enough so when he split and made a sure croaker he knew for a legitimate script because of his herniated disc at least he'd get a sound for a change instead of just normal when he got on the stand to play and people expected him to blow his brains out/know what I mean?

Blue denim pants/blue work shirt were the uniforms issued to us people getting off of stuff. The officials confiscated our street shoes/pried the heels up looking for hollowed out hiding places/after a few days if you wanted you could send a written request to receive them back/buttonless woolen pullover sweaters you could have those. Fact-was, the sweaters, they happened to be a mark of affluence. An expensive cashmere cherished, worn with an aura of distinction much like grey sideburn commercial advertisements in the Esquire Magazine for Scotch-Irish Plaid Whiskey. Old Plantation cigarettes, two packages a week/gratis/toothbrush and toothpaste/gratis/razor blade and razor to be signed for returned to the policeman/gratis. Instant Maxwell Coffee, ice cream, candy, barbecue sandwiches, Camels, Kools and Lucky Strikes sold at the canteen if you had bread in your account. Bread in your account another distinct mark of affluence. And still yet more talk.

"One thing I never did, I don't care how sick or broke I was, was go through my mothers pocket-book. Not like some of the ones down here who brag about what they stole from their families." — "Pimp, I never was a pimp for my sister either, like you know who I'm talking about, the dirty rat bastard."

Known snitches who come in asking for protective custody wear green garb and are isolated from the common herd residing in more comfortable and less crowded quarters, much, I might add, to the consternation of us unknown snitches. Among users and pushers in our cultural nether world this years hero more than likely through the word of some mouth became tomorrows stool pigeon.

VI

The way I understood it. At least the way it was explained to me.

He walked with a slight dip in his left shoulder because he'd been shivved in Leavenworth penitentiary over a love affair when much younger. So anyway here he was lying on his bed in a two man drum partially naked with his long soft thick prick exposed. Its head peeking out a quarter of an inch from about the preetiest forskin I'd had the good fortune to feast my eyes on in quite awhile. A couple of bags containing cigarettes, peanuts and Almond Joys he had sent me when he heard I had wound in.

That I could take him to my bozum as an act of faith in my mouth to ease out, for want of a better word I'll call his come love juice. Then after, knowing his type, to be held up as a symbol of ridicule in a mans world. Fuck him! Even that I have no doubt whatsoever would prove slimey, shitty in fact.

Anyway everybody had a story. Everybody had a

halo to show off. Third Avenue/14th Street/under the EL bums standing around picking their noses/look below let alone touch what they call private parts and their insulted/flustered/embarassed/flushed with blood reddening ugly twisted faces, yet given the chance to lower myself, I still would have sucked them off if anyone of them had the decency to approach me properly.

Since i'm mentioning words for want of better phrases I've figured out the key one. The key one is 'respect'. To identify myself physically as a cocksucker/take care of these bums sexually and not have them laughing at you after, slurring even ones presence derisively. Well I know from personal experience that that's how they are, these men who call themselves 'straight'. I've even heard them declare openly that they dont have any 'respect' for anyone who sucks their cock.

Sending me those two bags of goodies were because he thought I might have smuggled some pills in a 'frenchy' up my asshole like he did more than once when he wound in to 'Lexington'.

"On the outside everything I wanted/everything I ever hoped to have. Cardboard boxes full of it stolen at night, cabinets pried open/thousands of grains, bottles of flaked crystal/reds, whites, blues, yellows. Body is gone though, soggy, saturated like a used plastic sponge. Guy next to me at the public urinal jerking off. Me, intoxicated/heavily sedated in a ten cent paybooth falling in a stupor at the aero-port/shiney brand new steel hypodermic point dropping on the cold square tiles, inlaid, I had selected my choice 26 gauge for the trip down on my second wind around of a loose collar with blood dropping also when I finally did manage to hit a vein. If that is'nt bad enough imagine me on the flight, soaring high in the sky/the no smoking sign doused/seat belt light unfastened/hitting the air-pockets in the water closet while the stewardess is knocking on the door rapidly wanting to know, 'Is everything alright in there'. I think rushed, breathless, 'Where does the crap go after you flush'."

Freddie Greenfield

BEACH SCENES

Man woman
fat sides rolling
over edges of suits
hand in hand stroll by
watching each other's faces laugh:
me here naked on blanket
so wind can touch me,
ruffle ball hair.

Fashionably shag-haired father
yanks young son's arm:
child's eyes following
other nude man
who enters surf.

Three long-haired little girls
walk up on me from behind:
"wacha doin?"
"Laying in the sun."
"Oh." Giggle, run.

Tall man grey hair slicked back
sixtyish-untaut flesh
sunglasses and the white cream protected
lips asking the time:
"I don't know."
"What are you reading?"
"Poetry by Ian Young."
"Oh, like Rod McKuen?"
"No."

Wakened by dimly heard "hello"
of short paunched man
in cut-off jeans
fingertips poised against crotch:
"You look good. You got
a beautiful ass. I'd love
to fuck it."
"I'm afraid this area
is too crowded."
"Sure is. My wife's
over there making
a sand castle."

—Daniel Diamond

florida

the land where oranges grow

as lush as loopholes

and fall to the ground

and rot

Mike Massing



LOVE AT FIRST FRIGHT

The moment
during my physical exam
when I knew I'd fallen
for the curly-haired intern
was when he stuck
probing jellied finger up my ass
carressed my prostate
& told me he found
no tumor.

Mark Morris



under the guise of good intentions,
in workday drag with a few pretensions,
delores do-re-mi bounced into the bank,
to cash a check for a weekend spree,
hoping to catch the tail end of a wild time,
with half a c-note rolled and stuffed in an errant
pocket,
strolled down charles street with a rolling swagger,
thinking all the while it's not enough, never enough,
and brandishing a cigarette as though it were a
rapier.

said the gods: well, delores d.r.m.,
if thy fortune offends thee cut it loose,
and cast it from thee,
and thus that errant pocket did divest itself of her
tight wad,
several tens and fives unwittingly tossed,
the bones to hungry dogs,
fleece by fate she mused retracing paths,
a shuffling gait,
mutter and curses for all and sundry folk
damn fuckers,
these bums will be cutting throats,
ripping off scabs to get their grimy fingers on my
loot,
shiftless louts, leprous scavengers,
may they rot in scum, delores quipped,
raising a gnarled fist skyward.

irked and trembling with a rage just a hair short of
madness,
delores rambled back to the bank and slipped
another check,
to the slightly startled teller who solicitously
inquired,
back so soon and spent so quick,
delores, holding tears in check, blurted out her
tawdry tale,
the teller incredulous gaping jaws and then,
bouquets of condolences and a fresh hanky,
pats on the back, lord love a duck and count your
blessings,
it wasn't more let's have a smile.

preening ruffled feathers delores gathered herself,
in cautious cloak and a mantilla of bluish funk,
sidled up to the counter of the local packy,
for a flagon of kickapoo joy juice, ozone-laced and
giftwrapped,
traipsed homeward to curl an upper lip around a sip
or two,
and passed into oblivion, scarcely noticed by the
mawkish boors,
who crowd the airways and leak into her lair,
to drown her in the existential madness of tee-vee,
and the instant replay,
foul she cried softly but nobody seemed to hear.

John Connolly

Opera in Central Park

Hanging from his shoulder
a black tape recorder whirrs Verdi
through the arcade.
He stands a strange sentry
at the men's room door:
his soiled brown suit
a bow bridge spanning a sea of flesh,
hair cropped to mascara thinness,
while his fingers,
offspring of that larger pudgy form,
pick the teeth of his pant zipper
in time with the arias
that rumble the old brick
or rattle the weak paned glass.
With thoughtful eyes
he surveys the men that go inside
and when vista stuns his sight
turns to follow him through.
Wrapped in the cold claw of porcelain
he stares heated reverence
upon this masterpiece
and, in deference to the finer music
of his vision's fulminating water,
silences Verdi.

David Chura



AT THE CAFE BLASE

Nailed to the bone-rack
Of familiarity,
There is still in us
Brilliance
In amused resignation.
Supportive of myths
And denied human honor,
We are kept decorative,
Hollow,
And in sad replay
Of ends never ending.

—Harry Blaisdell



DOWN AND UP

true and boring in equal parts
stroke for stroke
the strongest yoke
can take a kicking
and keep on licking
but never broke
spoke

put your eggs into one basket
and toss it in the air
toss off, so to speak
one basket of nonsense
and yoke hair
obscure and greasy
egg on your face

nose
eyelashes

be specific
spread your legs
tell me a true-boring thing.
say it earnestly
then shove it in

—Lee Thom

Nude in a Bookstore

Draped in blue denim
slouched on tilted stool
by browsing table
he was crystal in all his parts
crystal dirty hat
crystal dirty shoes
I watched as I would a minotaur and
he sat like one
but as crystals feel about dust
he would not be watched
he tilted further backward until
thighs cat arched from
where his hair and head and arms
and legs hung together
in one crystal crotch.
So who was he fooling
I touched the hole in his dirty shoes
I felt the crystal hoof
as I browsed through a book.

Emanuel Ro

I wasn't hungry
but he kept looking at the chicken
he kept talking to the cold bluing skin
rubbing each bump
spreading the icy legs
and smearing weakness with grease
his hands sitting on the stool of its heart
making it begin to beat inside its cage
until all you could smell
was sweat
and all you could hear was the throbbing
of two hearts
and all you could see was the story of bones
wishing wishing wishing

there is a wind storm in n.y.c.
they expect flooding
they tie the boats to the piers
they carry their dogs home
they lock their doors
and they wait and wait and wait

There was a party
and everyone came in military dress
there was a sailor at the party
the sailor brought his ship
the ship aimed its great cannons
I looked at my ring
I fell into the green stone
I watched the war in the bedroom
I watched the sailor undress
and learn new tactics

There was a war
the sailor went home alone
they buried the dead at sea
I felt guilty for shooting
they filled the punch bowls
they waved good-bye with white hankies
they promised over the phone
they ate all the salad
they whispered by the plate and asked to try on each
others bones

i remember how good it felt to win
how in relationship there is submission
there is chicken
there are uncultured children who rob
there must be men who don't carry
weapons
they are the geometrists of life
for the triangles of love
side by side come night
and pray for the temple of bones
on monday
they are the sailors at sea who protect
they know your number
that is the risk
you always go home alone
you always grow empty and sigh
because you don't really know
what you've won

Timm Louis

Cruising in Circles

Walta Borawski

Along the Espanade
there is a willow —
someday I'll hang from it,
waiting for a man.

At the Fenway
there are dark, broody reeds.
Some night I'll stay amidst
their roots and critters,
moaning for a man.

At the Jolar
there are machines that turn on
at the drop of a coin
that is not a coin.
Someday I will roll myself —
flatten my horny limbs —
always reaching out, always
underfed — to a coin
that is not a coin —
buys nothing —

Spinning places faces
for men
hungry as me
at the same time:
find no one!



And he'll come —
carry me away —
to something needed,
something that fits,
something that don't need
the love of men.

and be stuck, never
again turned on,
never again turning on, but always
spinning for a man.
and forevermore

stick myself into a machine —

Tennessee Whistling

I

Apple lips on country boy
ripe in the fall
off weak branch
and chance-twisted stem,
rolling the earth,
entwined in night and dirt spice,
stark stars digging deep
points in the sky.

Bleed into the deep and the dirt,
stormtroopers were your early dreams;
crawling figures in the night,
each crooked, their knuckles
breaking large inside eyes;
no other vision, loss in the fear,
a sullen, silent gift.

Those cars whistling by the window,
fragrant mechanicals
holding you, familiar sounds.
waiting on slowed engine,
footsteps heading up the porch,
screen shaking in loose hand,
welcomed in for awhile.
Screen doors are good things
for all kinds of insects.

August comes soft on a breeze,
a lilac late-blooming,
crackling in the chill wearing,
the fall to come,
and each leaf a brittle testament,
a patched will of nature,
a will-o'-the-wish.

II

A wish that when old,
he should die
of what made him;
and that he be changing,
not ending
in established tradition:
the lemoned tea-
afternoon-bath style;
but abrupt,
sooner than later,
before,
not after the fact.

Waiting for rain
to come steaming clean sidewalks,
freeze in sliding patterns on grey windows;
the thin strings
of sirens
play against the night,
broken harmonies,
rhythmic in your body,
the up and down negotiations.

Cries in the street
take you back to being born,
the long hush of first breath
cracked wide open by . . . smack.
Wet with some other's life now,
you reach out beneath
for a towel,
aborting in one clean sweep,
a terry-cloth death.

III

Arms grow white
hiding in the light of city rooms,
sacrifice is easy at times,
less painful than the crucifix,
undermining all your life
with tunnels of disbelief;
torn inside
by your own scratching,
resembling something beautiful,
you are destructive,
a hurt to the eyes,
a vision in the ass.

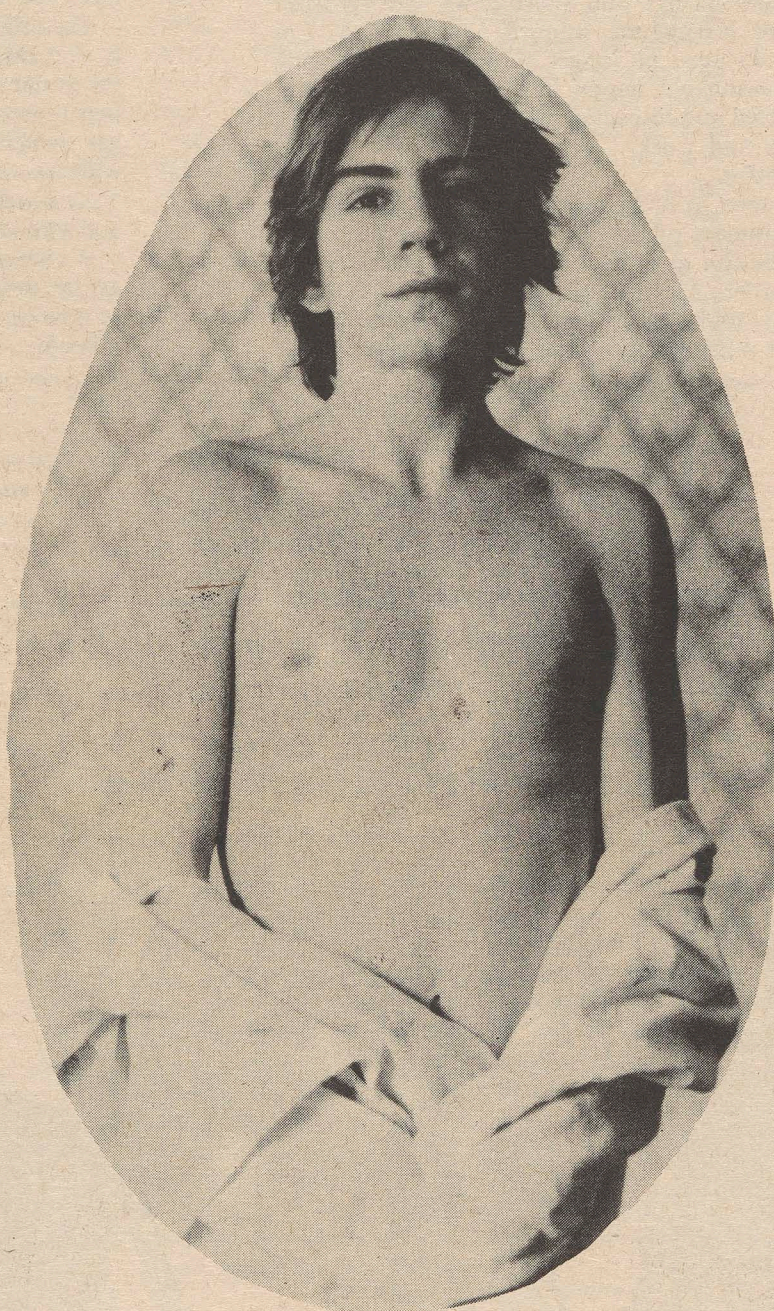
Your mouth,
sticky with the aftertaste,
youth; the sick, sweet juices,
ripe-rotten in the prime,
the wicked and simple mouth.
the cold flame in your cigarette
afterwards,
the brave line of your lips
not shaking in the dim lamp.

IV

Neither father nor lover,
it is not clear
what I should say.
But dye yourself russet,
bleed into the dirt,
sweat out the life
hidden, hidden, darkly dead.
Your eyes and hands alone
alive, nervous, shifting,
screening out the stormtroopers.

Dreams are half our hopes,
most of our lives,
are mothers and lullabies,
soft men and sighs,
country lilac lips on apple boys,
cars whistling to Tennessee
on long roads and soft wheels.

Raymonde Saint-Pierre



"PIRATE HENRY"

We meant to catch it:
But after the picnic we crawled
onto a ledge overhanging the Falls
And nervously pawed at each other
before realizing, with pants
down to our knees,
There was just enough light left
to make our way up the
moss-covered stair;
the thick stand of pines
muffling the echo of our
previous step.
Shivering now,
we watched as the excursion boat
pulled away over black water.

Another time we were so anxious
to get to Our future
We found ourselves staring across
the water from different steamers -
each of us surrounded by the
parasoled ladies and dapper gents
of a sepia-tint photograph.

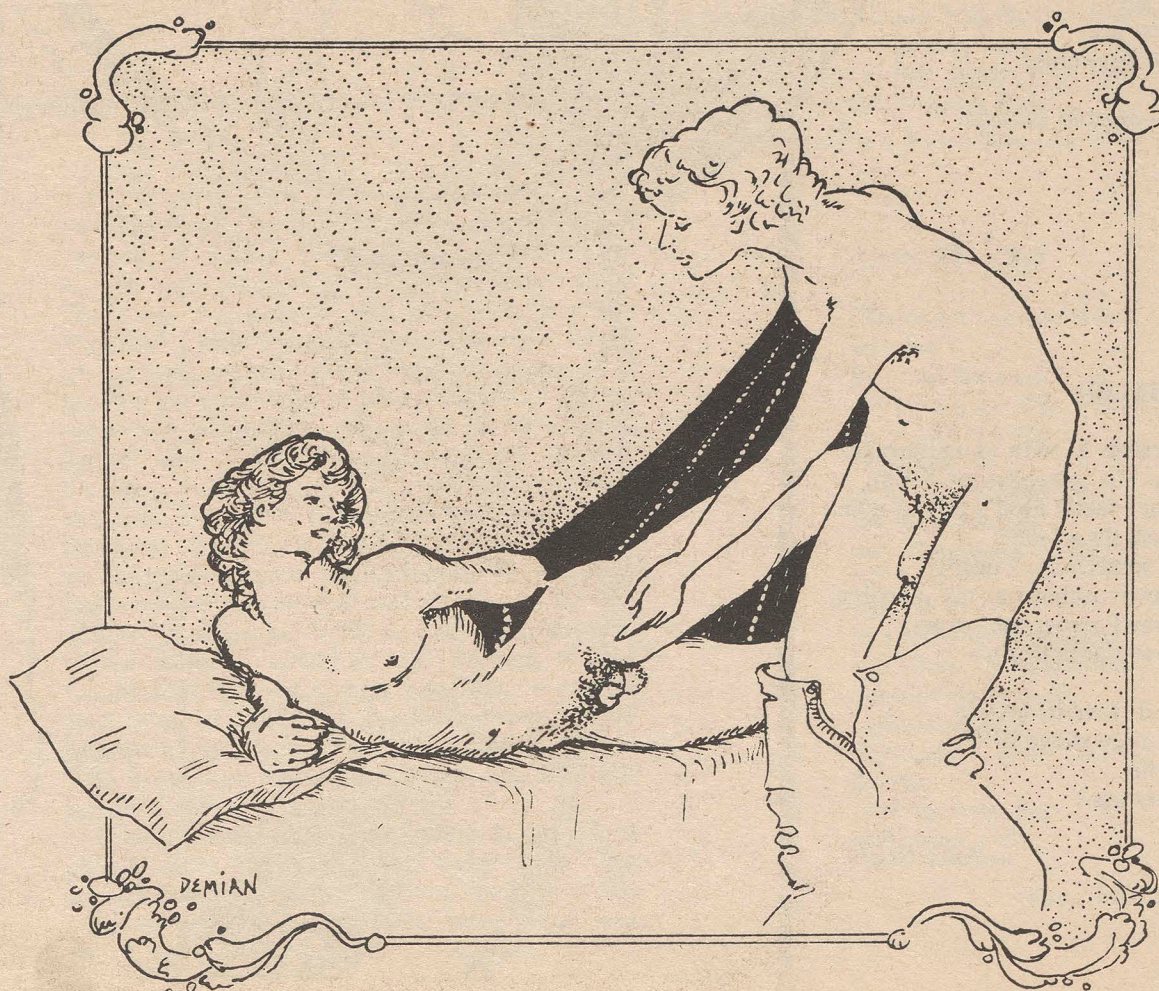
Finally,
we alone were left with the
operation of an aging luxury liner:
The engines somehow responding
to your commands
And the passenger list made up of
characters we'd played and
then discarded,
who would be willing stand
in our defense
if the charge of mutiny was leveled.

—Steve Bedworth

a poem
phallic thrills
burst on a page
an orgasm
transferred
from penis
to heart
to mind
to words
to paper
to you

release is slow to come, friend
and the erection of the mind continues.

Scott Giantvalley



YOU JUST ARE

punk rock snearing
with butch-femme lips
sex pistols fire
from loaded hips
target aim
to church & state
& O MY GOD
the family!
you don't need
to wanta be,
you just *are*
an ANARCHIST!

pep rally cheers
before the game
baskets shoot
a high school court

long hairs dribble
cross the floor
hang jockey straps
around the neck
the bouncing bulge
through rip torn shorts
marks a basket's
easy score

cheer-leaders' blouses
blazing red
the letter 'A'
is painted black
their chorus line's
fire island kick:
give me give me

Anarchy
fall and huddle
each other's breasts
sex roles forgotten
stay unguessed

the P.T.A.
at senior prom
punk rock prom
punk rock plays
a different drum
smash the church &
smash the state
rock 'n roll
revolting straight
turn the tables
smashing class
the new school colors
red & black
pounding drive
an east side drive
the music blasts
the scored catch
sniff the crotch
of sweaty jeans
procreates
the Anarchy
destruction of
the family
punk rock pound
his hard young ass
back-door rhythms
Anarchy
& you don't need to
wanta be
you just are
an Anarchist

—Harold Pickett

UNTITLED

He arrives as with an entourage
alone. His eyes dart my room.
(If not exactly God's gift to man
then surely a loan.)
I say something. I don't
(O slowly unbutton. my martinet,
I'll crawl across the carpet.
O slowly unbutton)
stop
(love it, love it, love it
when they shove it)
until he
(up my ass.)

—John Dolan

Us and the New Left

(Note: SDS — Students for a Democratic Society — became vital during the early '60s, inspired by the civil rights movement and student unrest. In the late '60s, as the Vietnam War progressed, SDS grew phenomenally. Under the pressure of FBI harassment, honest confusion in stressful times, and internal factionalism, SDS dissolved itself in 1971. Last summer, about 100 of us who had been active in SDS met for a week in Michigan — invited by a group in the Bay Area who hoped for a renewal of old friendships, a discussion of past events, and perhaps even some renewal of political ties).

During the weeks prior to the Michigan gathering, I had worked up some confidence about the event: After all, this was not 1964, when Tom Hayden confidently announced that there was to be no homosexuality or marijuana on our community organizing project, and then proceeded to borrow my room to bed down with his latest woman, leaving me stunned and terrified. I'm nearly 35 now; no longer conflicted about being gay; reasonably happy in my relationship; and supported and respected for being gay in my community and work. I see myself as creative and thoughtful.

I hoped to bring to this gathering ideas about the legitimacy of gay politics, a sense of the special contribution gays have in creating a new, more just, order. And I knew that at least a few other faggots, and at least one dyke, would be there. Sure, I was anxious — but as I hitchhiked across

By Carl Wittman

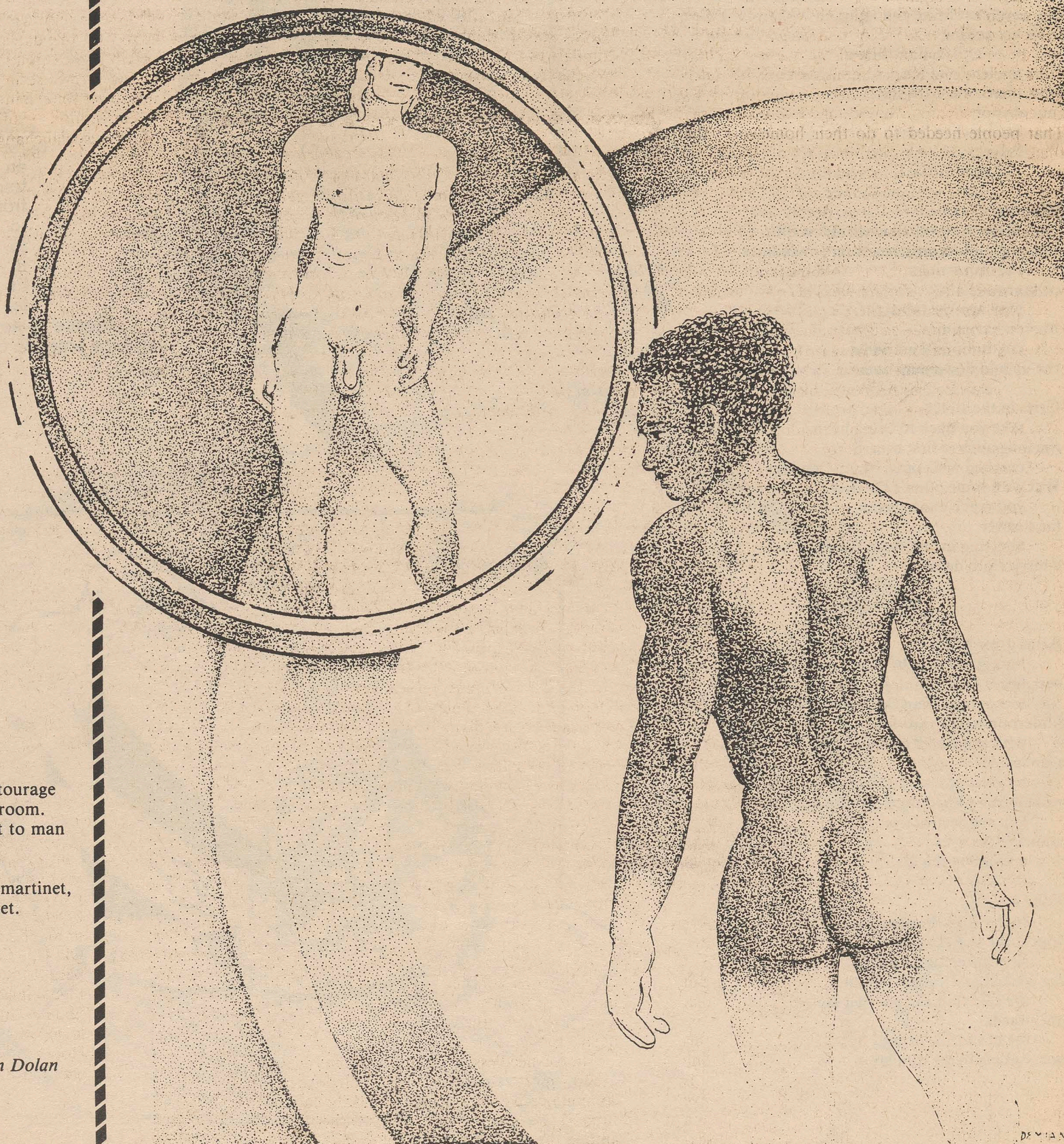
the flatness of Indiana and Ohio that day, I was mostly preoccupied with getting there on time.

A car met me and some others in town, to drive us out to the camp. Within 10 minutes I was biting my tongue, holding back tears: one of the old "leader" types was holding forth as usual, occupying 95% of the space, talking about nothing but consolidating his importance. A Canadian woman — who as another 2% minority there — sensed my crisis, and told me to relax, it was all right. Well, something old, something new. Avoiding as many encounters with old acquaintances as I could, I checked in and fled to bed.

It was like a trip back to one's family, or high school reunion. Surely all my growth and maturity, painfully eked out over the years, is not all illusion. But back in the old settings, the new me wears thin. The old responses are deeply imbedded, like my New Jersey accent which gets thicker when I'm tense.

The original invitation had ignored us completely, but through some months of correspondence, the initiators had taken care to encourage a meaningful presence of gays: especial attempts to coax gay ex-SDS'ers to come, scheduling our workshop without competition, even no orange juice. A "gay issues" workshop was the second afternoon, and a good two-thirds of the people came.

We sat in a large circle. A few of us spoke first, gently, tentatively: the one up-front lesbian spoke of how her identity as an artist was important, and related, to her sexual identity. Two faggots who



Drawing by DEMIAN

had not been intimately involved with SDS told how they were experiencing the conference. I tried to share an idea about the particular kinds of vision and wisdom we gays have the potential for, being both part of and estranged from our family and peers.

Three heterosexuals spoke next. A woman said she wasn't particularly sympathetic to our cause, and she hoped to hear things which would change her mind. One man wondered about our relationship to children, implying, I felt, that there was something inadequate and unfulfilling about the gay condition. He went on to say that if we felt put-off and hurt by straight people, we made him feel the same way. An older man made a plea for not making categories, telling an anecdote about his daughter, who proclaimed her gayness and then went off to live with a man.

A wind kicked up, and it began to rain; inside of me, too, a storm arose. I know, intellectually, that there is misunderstanding and ignorance aplenty; I had imagined beforehand that I would respond with wisdom and care. Instead I was enveloped by waves of anger and bitterness.

What I had heard was: prove to me you're ok; what's a matter, you don't like kids? you're not oppressed, and we're not responsible; any feelings of being oppressed are your own problems, let's just be people and forget about all this.

As we walked up the lawn to reconvene under cover, I found myself next to a woman who back in the late '60s had been a staunch and loving friend when I was dissolving my marriage and getting involved in gay liberation. Her presence let me say it: I wept, and started raving. I hated these people; my lover back in Oregon was right that I was a fool to come here; I didn't want to appear like a blubbering, screaming wretch in their presence.

I managed to get it together enough to enter the meeting hall; I pondered that the calmness and equanimity that I had been counting on, was totally undermined. I felt weak, attacked, helpless. I watched sullenly, hardly understanding what was being said, trying to find some strength to speak my anger. One gay man related the fear he felt, listening to a straight man say how upsetting it was we weren't doing our part as parents. Many straights were offended; the tension grew.

A Berkeley woman, one of the conference initiators and the one most responsible for what openness there was to gay issues, spoke calmly but strongly — saying all the things I wanted to say. That people needed to do their homework; that there was a double standard in accepting the reality of minority groups; that it was arrogant for the straights to presume so much, with so little empathy or knowledge. I was deeply moved, and immensely grateful that there were heterosexuals who not only sympathized but understood. I was barely able to hold in my sobbing until I could walk around the room to reach her. My tears cut short her words, and there was a long silence. Much support, most visibly from women.

A past national officer, also gay, chronicled his forced removal from office, his gayness a major target. Tears streamed down his face, but the words were coherent and eloquent. More support, more silence. This climax of tension was the permission people had waited for — permission to wade into their deep feelings, trapped inside. A long string of testaments followed, largely about the collapse of our dreams, and the inhumanity that had occurred on so many levels within SDS and the new left — the "hidden injuries" that so many had sustained.

It was clear that this catharsis was valuable — the absence of emotional depth was surely one of the things wrong with the politics of the '60s — and as long as we all carried around the unspoken hurts, it certainly didn't make any sharing easier. But I was still angry. I had waited 15 years for time to talk about gay issues, and before half the allotted time was up, they had managed to get off the subject and talk about *their* hurts.

Having already overrun the time, the discussion continued as many who hadn't originally come filtered into the room for the next session. Some of these people felt that all the gesturing was irrelevant and self-indulgent, and what we needed was solid analysis and political discussion. (Sometimes I have trouble remembering what was new about the new left . . .).

A number of speakers talked about how those of working class origin had never been acknowledged each other, as such. True enough, I thought, and it's good that it happen . . . but some of that talk began to verge on homophobia: "what are you complaining about; we suffer from *real* oppression" is what I heard. Occasionally this idea came out in what is a common idea among the older, more politically rigid people — that it is one's responsibility, nay life itself, to have children and get a steady job and "take it like a man." The corollary is that all this talk about sex-

uality, gays, women, counterculture, is self-indulgence by a spoiled generation.

I was feeling lonely, increasingly paranoid, and thought seriously about leaving. The organizers took it upon themselves to postpone the evening program, which was to have been a slide show and discussion on violence against women in advertising imagery. They apparently felt that we had had enough emotion and sexual politics for one day — but it increased my feeling that things hadn't changed any, and I didn't belong in this group any more than I did back in 1966. (It was then when I quit, upset by the way leaders used women — but surely I was half aware even in my closeted state that this was a bad place for me to come out in).

Even more strongly, I was upset with myself for letting straight people affect me so much; and for losing touch with my calmness and strengths in the midst of what is surely not-very-hard-core homophobia. One notion in my mind then — only months after the Miami vote — was that we gays need to reach out to possible allies, to avert being used as America's scapegoat. As one of the men there — a Jewish faggot — said, thinking about San Francisco: "They said, in 1938, that Warsaw was the most Jewish city in the world." And what sense did it make, in the light of such greater needs, for me to be so undone by one workshop?

As the week wore on, I refound some equilibrium. One is not presented often with an opportunity to delve deeply into the past, and yet be in the present with those same people. Things were the same, and yet different. Our presence as gay men (and women) was acknowledged, and respected; and throughout the week there was not the old avoidance of the issue. We felt freer to offer our experiences as they shed light on other topics: racism, feminism, art-and-politics, counterculture, ideology.

There were only a handful of blacks there, and only one of them there for the whole week and willing to engage people in discussion about race. She had anger — but love, too: there was some honest discussion about racism, past and present. And the question which hands over the group: how does a predominantly white group integrate with or make meaningful alliances with third world people(s). She was extremely supportive of us gays, and I think we acknowledged areas of similarity: fear of being scapegoated, understanding the feelings of not being visible or validated.

The author of this article would like to hear from gay women and men interested in future gatherings or communications of the sort described here.

We had hope for a large-scale conference this summer including ex-SDS folk and more representation from the third world, feminist and gay movements. Apparently that is not going to happen. The convening group in California split up over sharp differences, and it is unclear whether anything more will come of it.

It would be useful, however, for gay people interested in more discussion with the larger "left" to be in touch with each other. Perhaps we can start a circle of correspondence — ideas, experiences, setbacks, openings, possibilities.

Carl Wittman, 3502 Coyote Cr. Rd.
Wolf Creek, OR 97497

Living in an area where there are many lesbians, most of them part of a new women's culture, I was continually surprised by the absence of feminist content. A change had occurred in personnel: women had proportionate roles in leadership. There were two women's caucuses. But there was remarkably little discussion about the implications of the women's movement on us as a group. A notable exception was the one lesbian — whose vision and imagination had led her so far into the future that I think most everyone, women included — thought she was too weird to take seriously. I liked her immensely, and found her a source of newness and strength; hers was a most exciting and valuable new friendship for me. And her presence made me acutely aware of the absence of any other lesbians, and the quiescence of the women's consciousness. Perhaps in this loaded setting, women were unwilling to engage each other in conflict — for there surely were a number of women there (many of them Marxists) who boycotted the women's caucuses and felt hostile to them.

Almost needless to say, the women were as a group more sensitive and enlightened and communicative than the men, and the bulk of the support we got as gays came from them. But among the straight men, there seemed to be more

ferment. A workshop on sexism drew four times more men than women. We men met by ourselves in smaller groups, and the discussion in our group was vital and exciting. While many of the past leaders were simply afraid of being criticized by women, they seemed open and respectful of dialogue with faggots. A number had pursued "men's liberation" — producing humans with a much wider emotional and creative pallet. I liked a lot of them, enjoyed being with them — feelings which I never remember having at SDS meetings. Discussion was cumulative, rather than argumentative. I didn't have a sense that many of them were likely to "come out," but I did feel that many could be trustworthy allies.

I did not feel sexually vulnerable with them, which is in part my decision to remain celibate at the conference. But even that was a change: I used to observe sexual tension at SDS meetings — men hustling women, showing off their charisma to attract women, decisions being warped for personal but unacknowledged needs. Consequently I felt lonely and left out, as my sexuality was taboo. At the conference, in contrast, it was easy to be celibate. People came with past hurts and a welter of mixed feelings, and very few wanted to see many of the old "womanizers" sound asleep in their camp bunkbeds by midnight.

Later that week there was a workshop dubbed "GAY 101." We had devised it to meet an obvious educational need. But only the gays, and a half dozen others who were supportive and friendly showed up. After a collective backrub, we talked about how we each thought gayness was relevant. It was a friendly, rambling discussion. One man, a therapist, thought that homophobia, not gayness, was the issue — to paraphrase lesbian poet Judy Grahn, "The subject of homosexuality is very ordinary; it's the question of homophobia that makes everybody angry."

But what impressed me most, in recalling that discussion, was what the lesbian put forth concerning art and gayness and politics. She equated her consciousness as a woman and lesbian and artist — and believed that through those channels, she was political, i.e., that she could effect the changes she could see were needed. These are ideas which have grown inside of me, too. I am not afraid of the dance teacher in me, while I am afraid of the "politico" inside of me; the potential of the former seems increasingly wonderful, and the power for evil in the latter, awesome.

This notion — of the transcendent importance of art in social change — seemed evident throughout the week. Those who had delved into their imagination, sexuality, creativity, seemed to embody a more whole and integrated vision; and at least as important, in light of the disaster of SDS in 1969-71, some greater wisdom in avoiding the pitfalls of the "let's go organize them" approach.

In retrospect, I see the conference having performed a good task — to make the circle more whole. These people were my family for some years — some distant cousins, but also brothers and sisters. It was painful for those of us who parted ways voluntarily; apparently it was traumatic for those who were ejected, or who left as part of a schism, or who remained at the end when the organization destroyed itself. And most of us have not had a context to absolve that rightful place; the absence of lesbians and third-world people was acknowledged; the leaders, who often had abused their privileges as men and officials, were offered their place back into the circle as brothers rather than leaders.

CAMPING OUT

"There's no point playing with fire,"
Scoutmaster said.
"What are our lives anyway but a pile of sticks."
After dark
some of the guys
(only the bravest)
play dangerous games.
Not brave
I watch.
In another part of camp
Old Chief Thundercould
plies his story trade.
Lightening later
Scoutmaster gives his next
lesson:
How to make fire
with moist sticks.

—Steve Abbott

NINE NOTES FROM SEABROOK

By Allen Young

Photos by David Bliss

I. A few years ago, a lesbian friend of mine saw a "No Nukes" bumper sticker on my pickup truck. "What does that mean?" she pointed, "no nuclear families?" To this day, I'm not sure whether or not she was joking, but the bumper sticker referred, of course, to the brand-new movement against nuclear power.

"I see you made the front page of the *Manchester Union-Leader*," a friend said to me a couple of weeks ago after the 8,000-strong Clamshell Alliance encampment on the site of the Seabrook, N.H., nuclear power plant. Actually, it was the banner "Gays Against Nukes," made by my friend Denis and carried by both of us at Seabrook, which appeared in a photograph on the first page of the infamous New Hampshire daily, the same paper that has characterized *Fag Rag* as "the most loathsome publication in the English language." The photo of our banner appeared in between two others, and the captions are illustrative of the thinking of the paper's editors. The first picture showed a man hawking a paper called *The Young Socialist*, with the caption, "The socialists were there. . . ." Then came our banner and the caption ". . . and so were the sodomites. . . ." And finally a photo of speaker Dick Gregory with the caption ". . . and Dick Gregory." I guess the paper couldn't bring itself to say ". . . and so were the niggers," though the thought was obviously there.

With more and more New Hampshire residents questioning nuclear power, the *Union-Leader* called up old prejudices and resorted to the simple tactic of trying to associate opposition to nuclear power with socialists, sodomites and blacks. In any case, the threat to the citizenry of New Hampshire of the multi-billion-dollar "nuke" becomes increasingly apparent, especially at billing time as the Public Service Co. adds charges for Construction Work In Progress (CWIP) to pay for the thing, since savvy investigators have already decided it's a bad risk.

II. Our "Gays Against Nukes" banner was a media success in any case. We also carried it in the June 17 Gay Pride march, and it appeared in a photo on the front page of GCN. Why a banner saying "Gays Against Nukes?" I summed up my feelings about the issues in a leaflet written especially for Seabrook. Denis and I handed out about a thousand of them — this is what it said:

Gays Against Nukes

On June 17, we carried our banner "Gays Against Nukes" in the Gay Pride march through downtown Boston, and we have brought the same banner here to Seabrook. Why?

Sexism and Environmentalism — The danger of nuclear power to this society is apparent to all of us here at Seabrook, but we urge each of you to think about what kind of a society this will be if Anita Bryant and the growing forces being mobilized by a powerful, wealthy and disturbingly popular right-wing continue to mount up victories. The referendum rescinding gay rights laws in Miami, St. Paul, Wichita and Eugene are scary historical events, no less so than America's continued insistence on nuclear power. Our involvement in the gay liberation and no nukes movements are inextricably linked for one simple reason — our survival as human beings depends on the success of both movements. Non-gay people have done little to support the gay movement — a fact that sometimes makes us angry and bitter, especially as we live in a rural area far from the supportive urban gay community (we don't like ghettos and we do like trees!). It is no accident that the views of right-wing militants like Anita Bryant and Mel-drim Thompson dovetail on so many issues.

Loyalty to a patriarchal system of values is the common root cause of male chauvinism, the exploitation of workers, the colonialization of dark-skinned peoples, the rape of the environment, and the contempt for homosexuals. In fact, the Clamshell Alliance owes much of its success to the anti-sexist consciousness that has helped it resist demands — mostly from ego-tripping men — toward late-sixties macho-style violent confrontations, centralism and political dogmatism. This nexus between environmentalism and feminism is nonetheless weak and must be strengthened. We must explore the connection between the rapist, the authoritarian father, the wife-beater and the fag-baiter on the one hand, and, on the other hand, those who seek to dominate nature with overly complex "mad scientist" technology, the wasteful consumption of natural resources, the contempt for "lesser" species, and the idea that "men" and their machines will always provide a solution to everything.

Anti-Gay Attitudes in the Anti-Nuclear Movement — Overt hostility to gay people within the Clamshell Alliance has not been apparent to us, though we don't doubt that there may be some instances of this, and certainly subtle anti-gay attitudes do exist. We call upon our friends in the Clamshell Alliance to take action against two blatant examples of anti-gay attitudes:

Akwesasne Notes, the Native American newspaper, in complete defiance of well-known facts concerning the roles of homosexuals, especially transvestite shamans, in Native American culture (a role repressed by Christian missionaries), has recently issued vicious anti-gay statements and has cancelled all exchange subscriptions with gay periodicals. We have a great respect for the Native American struggle to survive and for their teachings about how people can live in harmony with the earth, but we have nothing but contempt for patriarchs of any culture who wish to keep women in traditional oppressive roles and who contribute to anti-gay oppression.

Gay people have also called for a boycott of Mother Earth News, which has repeatedly refused to accept advertising for RFD, a gay male country journal, on the grounds that its readership would be offended. We urge you to write letters in support of gay people to Akwesasne Notes, Mohawk Nation, Roosevelttown, N.Y., and Mother Earth News, Hendersonville, N.C.

Gay Invisibility — There's a gay liberation button that says "How dare you assume I'm heterosexual?" Gay men and lesbians make up about 10 percent of the population; approximately 10 percent of the people here at Seabrook are gay. Most gay people, even today after nearly 10 years of gay activism, do not feel free to be open about their sexuality, even in supposedly "liberated" environments such as this encampment. The presumption of universal heterosexuality is a weapon in the arsenal meant to keep us isolated, alienated, frightened and oppressed. We are told that sexual preference is a private matter, that it doesn't have to be brought up here, yet open affection by heterosexual couples and socializing in a heterosexual context are commonplace here, while gays are supposed to remain invisible.

We hope that many affinity groups will find the time this weekend to discuss the issues raised in our leaflet. We welcome comments and criticisms.

Allen Young and Denis Helmus
Millers River Ospreys Affinity Group
Butterworth Farm, RFD 2
Orange, MA 01364

The reaction to the leaflet was mostly positive, especially from women. Many men stuffed it in their pocket and some seemed annoyed that we would bring "that" up in Seabrook. (When Denis and I carried the banner in the Gay Pride march, we got mostly positive response, especially from straights in the crowd. I felt a little funny about that: they could relate to our being against nukes, but could they relate to us as just plain faggots?)

III. One gay man I knew, S., an anti-nuclear activist from the Amherst, Mass., area, had previously encouraged me in the idea of distributing a leaflet. At Seabrook, he asked me for some of the leaflets to hand out, but when he finished reading one, he said disconcertedly, "Oh, you're angrier than I am." I was somewhat taken aback, but willing to admit that maybe I was angrier, so I said, "Well, if you can't relate to the leaflet, don't feel obligated to hand them out," and, apparently let off the hook, S. just took a couple for himself.

Was the leaflet in fact "too angry?" I really don't know. Ironically, I have thought of myself, especially in the last couple of years, as a lot less angry than some of my gay friends, especially some of the people who work on *Fag Rag*. Last year's *Fag Rag* banner in the Gay Pride march ("Christianity Is The Enemy") and this year's banner ("We Will Destroy Your World") both struck me as overly angry and negative. I agreed with the sentiment of both banners — as S. agreed with the sentiment of our leaflet — but I saw the excessive anger and words like "enemy" and "destroy" as a turn-off rather than a turn-on. I see myself as a "communicator" above all, and turning people on to certain ideas and information is one of my major goals as a socially-conscious person. I cannot definitively say whether or not our leaflet and our banner was successful on those terms. I hope so, but maybe S.'s judgment was more correct than mine.



IV. My experience with Seabrook, including the weeks leading up to my participation in the demonstration, compelled me to think a great deal about what it means to be a radical in 1978. Technically speaking, "radical" means getting to the root of things, and, while not inclined toward a dogmatic analysis, I don't hesitate to say that radical feminism has done more than any other organized group of ideas to explain the injustices that abound in today's world. But I also know that radicalism means making connections. My social consciousness also depends on my understanding of (but not my obedience to) socialism, anarchism, pacifism, vegetarianism, humanism, internationalism; my Jewish identity; the struggle against racism; and the essentially spiritual notion of "universal love." Celebrating my gayness, and trying to live with dignity as a faggot, is but a part of a larger picture.

Like many men and women who became gay and lesbian activists, I was involved a decade ago in New Left politics. My basic mistrust for what has been termed the "male-dominated left" has kept me away from most of the activities and the periodicals (such as *Seven Days* and the *Guardian*) which reflect the remnants of that bygone era. With the anti-nuclear struggle, however, I felt compelled to become involved once again in political action dominated by straight males. (It is a myth that the Clamshell Alliance is controlled by women. Women play an important role in the Clamshell and feminist ideas have influenced it significantly, but to say that feminist consciousness governs the Clamshell is an exaggeration.)

A summary of my political view of the anti-nuclear issue is contained in the preceding leaflet. On a more personal level, I am responding to the fact that my house and garden, my permanent home, my new roots, are located just 20 miles east of the proposed twin reactor nuclear plant in Montague, Mass.; 40 miles east of the Rowe, Mass., nuke; and just 15 miles southeast of the (mal)functioning Vermont Yankee reactor in Vernon, Vt. Nuclear technology is dangerous, frightening and extremely unhealthy; it threatens life on earth as much or more than any aspect of fascist-style politics.

V. Mostly, it felt very good to participate politically as up-front gay men with straight people in the Seabrook action. Denis and I and another gay friend and neighbor, Bob, joined with 12 other men and women from our West-Central Massachusetts area in an "affinity group." Although I feel they could have been even more positive (more frequent words of encouragement would have been nice), and although Denis and I occasionally wondered if our gayness was somehow "too much" for our friends, they were generally supportive of our injection of gay politics into Seabrook.

It was interesting living in close quarters with so many straight people. We enjoyed shared meals cooked on campstoves, and we slept reasonably comfortably in several tents. I had a small two-person tent, and when no one chose to share it with me, I couldn't really decide if it was the smallness of the tent, or some vague sexual fear. Denis's two-person tent was slightly larger, but when John (a man we presume to be straight) shared the tent with him, he pointedly slept way over to one side as if to warn Denis, "hands off!" Given Denis's enthusiasm for John, this was especially funny to us, but of course such an exaggerated gesture was not necessary (or was it just a coincidence?). Denis and I (and 99% of gay men) are not rapists and we know what "no" means;

sometimes I wonder if straight men burden us with their rape fantasies and irrational fears of faggotry.

VI. My own sexual energy was overflowing at Seabrook, and dealing with it was a part of the experience. I've been without a lover or boyfriend for nearly two years, and in the six months prior to Seabrook, I'd had sex only four or five times. There were a lot of attractive men at Seabrook, and I was often aware of my "roving eyes." No, I didn't go there for sex, but hope springs eternal. . . . One afternoon, I sat with my friend Rice (a married woman) watching the people parade by, and we discussed what it means to be attracted to men with non-hairy chests, a preference we share (we reached no conclusion except that such preferences are very real). I don't doubt that I was "objectifying" the men I was looking at. I have concluded that, radical feminism and John Stoltenberg notwithstanding, such objectification is an intrinsic part of my sexuality and I'm not convinced it's as harmful as some people say, when done respectfully. I didn't have sex with anyone at Seabrook, but I realized on the third and final night of the encampment that had the occupation lasted longer, say a week or two, I eventually would have been able to develop a sexual and perhaps emotional relationship with another man.

Crucial to my reaching that conclusion was the universal commitment of the Seabrook occupiers to non-violence. We had all undergone non-violent training; all of us were pledged to non-violence. The fear of violence — fag-bashing by individuals or gangs — is undeniably a major factor that keeps gay men ghettoized. With the fear of violence eliminated, the possibility of communication on a sexual level between all people, regardless of gender, opens up. I definitely felt that opening up beginning to occur at Seabrook. It reminded me that creating a non-violent community is an important part of my life. I also reflected that in five years at Butterworth Farm, where I live, where there have been a series of problems and conflicts, each situation was resolved without resort to violence — perhaps an unusual accomplishment for a group of men in America. While not attracted to the sometimes patriarchal dogmatic, sectarian and self-righteous aspects of pacifism, I feel a special tie to the lesbians and gay men — notably Barbara Deming, Bayard Rustin, Igal Roodenko, and the late Rev. Robert Spike — who have made major contributions to the non-violent approach to social change.

VII. One of the "highest" times at Seabrook was the last night when several hundred of us, mostly folks from Western Massachusetts, were dancing and singing in a huge circle. The harmonies were sweet and gentle. The rhythm of the spontaneous dancing was free-flowing and we were not relating in couples. (The one exception was a group who organized a Virginia reel, and separated themselves into two lines of men and women. I found myself the only man in the women's line, and got ready to argue if anyone objected. But before anyone said anything, I quit because I felt too uncomfortable and also because they didn't know how to do the Virginia reel very well.)

We sang old protest songs like "We Shall Over-

come" and "Oh, Freedom," and the anti-nuclear topical parodies to "Acres of Clams" and "Down by the Riverside." At different times in our big swaying circle, I had my arms around women and men, and there were a few occasions where sparks of sexual attraction may have been happening, but these didn't have a chance to be fully explored, as we soon retired for the night. In a flash of fantasy, however, I'd imagined myself inviting one of the men for a walk and possibly sex, and I also thought to myself, "Why not an orgy?" Indeed, I felt that a certain amount of puritanism infected the Clamshell spirit, a puritanism I can do without. Although sex was never mentioned, it should have been as much a part of our celebration as singing and dancing. And though we all agreed beforehand to leave pot at home, I resented being asked to yield to a repressive law telling me what herb I may or may not ingest. Again, I was making connections: I mistrust a political movement which tells me what I should or should not do with my own body. It reminded me of the observation that Carl Wittman made in his 1969 Gay Manifesto, recalling the time earlier in the decade when "a dignitary of SDS on a community organization project announced at an initial staff meeting that there would be no homosexuality (or dope) on the project."

VIII. Lesbians were more visible than gay men at Seabrook. There were two groups of women with signs emblazoned "Dykes Against Nukes," one from the Cambridge area, the other from the Amherst-Northampton area. I saw a number of women with pink triangle buttons, and other clusters of women easily identified as lesbians. There was a women's crisis tent set up by lesbians, though I noticed that the tent was gone on the third day and I never did find out if there was some reason that the women left early (or if perhaps they only moved to another location). A group of lesbians and feminists read a statement from the stage early Sunday, but its strong feminist message apparently irked some of the men. I wasn't there when they read it (I didn't know they were going to do it), but Denis told me that some of the men were visibly annoyed and seemed threatened. Denis and I both felt that many of the men did not want to have to deal with sexual politics (our leaflet, the lesbians' statement) at Seabrook, that if it were up to them, we would have stayed at home or at least stayed in the closet. For whatever reason, however, there was no attempt by gay men or lesbians to express a united gay/lesbian voice at Seabrook.

It definitely seems to me that lesbians, more than gay men, are tuned in to the values and the importance of the anti-nuclear movement. I suppose it has something to do with the feminist analysis of technology that we tried to sum up in our leaflet. Are most gay men still too wrapped up in ideas of dominance, too unable to get in touch with the nurturing attitudes that our planet so desperately needs? Many of the leaders of the organized gay community, especially those who want to see gay people "make it" in the powerful institutions that run this society, repeatedly fail to make connections between gay issues and other issues. This is a self-conscious choice they have made, a tragic one. Many of us reject that choice, but in the meantime, a sort of conscious-

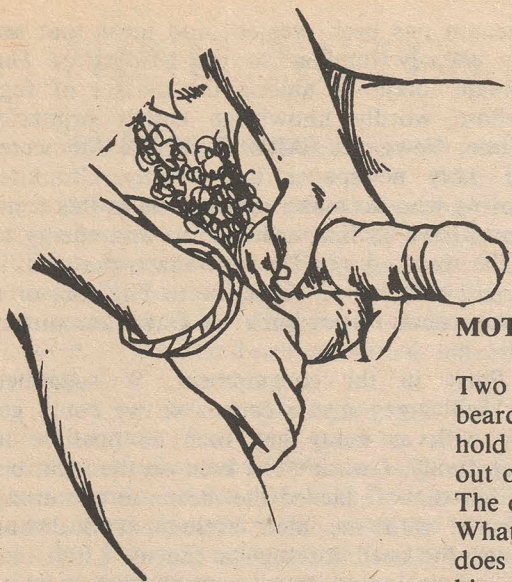
ness vacuum has been created, and ideas that are at least vaguely familiar to the readers of *Fag Rag* remain unknown among the masses of faggots whose wordly knowledge comes primarily from Time, Newsweek, After Dark, the Advocate, a local daily newspaper and Walter Cronkite. Those of us who do make connections in this complex world have to find a little time and energy to spread the word. A good way to start, perhaps, is to convince a friend to subscribe to *Fag Rag* or a community news-forum such as Gay Community News.

IX. Early in the encampment, S. suggested that we call a gay men's caucus so we could get together with as many gay men as possible to talk. Personally, I wasn't too keen on the idea, because I felt that we lacked the means to communicate clearly with the men present at Seabrook concerning the need for such a caucus. I felt that such a caucus would be too small and that we would have nothing to say to each other. Although S.'s idea was a good one in theory, I feel that my fears proved to be justified. We held the caucus, but I do not think it was very successful. Although there were more than 10,000 people on the site that Sunday, only eight men came, and five of us knew each other previously from Western Massachusetts. (S. had to leave before the caucus happened.) The caucus had been posted on a bulletin board and, after some difficulty and with the help of a gay man on the communications committee, it was announced from the stage early Sunday (before the crowd was very big).

After some slightly embarrassing pauses, and moving away from the roadway where most of us were still busy cruising, we had a discussion of about an hour. We agreed that there was little gay consciousness in the Clamshell literature that tried to link the anti-nuclear struggle with other struggles (usually leaving out gay liberation). For example, it seems much easier for the Clamshell people to connect the anti-nuclear struggle to Native American issues. We also felt frustrated at the lack of anti-nuclear consciousness in the gay community. The word "disco" was uttered with contempt more than once during our conversation. We also agreed that there wasn't much we could do except to try to spread the word — as gays, as Clams — as best we could. Two of the men in the caucus were from Vermont, one from Michigan, and afterward, I felt bad that we hadn't even exchanged addresses.

I think I also felt guilty because I wasn't attracted to any of the men. I was attracted to C., who didn't show up at the caucus though he said he would. I'd met C. the first night of the encampment, and I was pleasantly surprised when he later asked me when the gay caucus was taking place. He said he was gay, but I suspect he wasn't out enough to join with us. I still have hopes of getting together with C. and becoming friends, with or without sex. Sometimes I think that if I were a little more discreet about my faggotry, and less political, I'd have a much better sex life. At the same time, however, I feel it's a choice I have already made. If closet cases are frightened by my openness, I may tend to put the blame on them and say it's more their loss than mine. But the truth is that we both lose out, and so does the greater community.

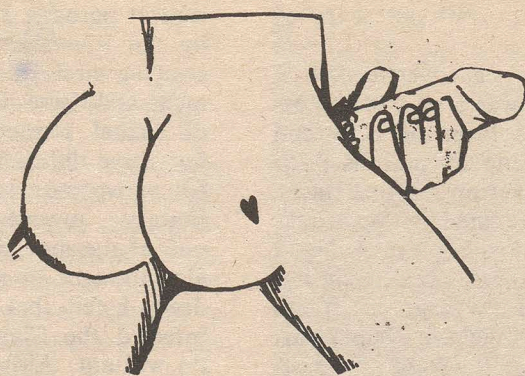




MOTORCYCLISTS

Two men on a motorcycle
beards & long hair flying
hold themselves awkwardly
out of fear their bodies might touch.
The one in back clutches luggage rack behind.
What dire consequences
does he imagine would follow in this homophobic land
his putting his arms round his buddy's waist?
Is he afraid all of a sudden he'd be kissing
his buddy on the back of the neck?
Putting his tongue in his buddy's ear?
Tearing open his buddy's shirt?
Does he fear somehow he'd manage
to push down far enuf his buddy's pants
to shove his throbbing cock
up that beautiful ass?

—Mark Morris



YOUTHFUL CLIMB.

There he laid-me down
in wet grass/ unbuttoned
me slowly/ shirt then pants
Then climbing me as did (a tree)
as a child, resting on my chest
looking out over the wide country side

2. 13. 78.

new orleans

MIJO

RESCUE

There's magic in your ass, lad
I don't know how it got there

Tingling waves of certainty
dogs stare, people fidget

Your butt's possessed
despite its wholesome look
a noiseless buzz unsettles us
a curse
I'll pry it out
I'll push it out
If all else fails
I'll wear it out

—Lee Thom

Sad,
our temporary parting
was sad
Aftersex, u observ/d:i
won/t clean
the spot on the sheet
So that when i awake tomorrow &
u/re not w/me i'll know that u
were here
Am i that ephemeral?
But u had left yr mark,substantial
upon me
Bruises blood a desire
for revenge
Yes,u had indeed left yr mark upon me
i will be back,i will be back!

—Jimm Basty

love in brooklyn heights

In the steel light
of one April dawn;

in the fires of your
burning arms;

in the unquenchable thirst
of your mouth's kisses;

in the long cold lie
of the hot words, "I love you,

I love you, I love you."
Moments, later,

I was obliged to fight
for my life and money!

—Maurice Kenny



STUD

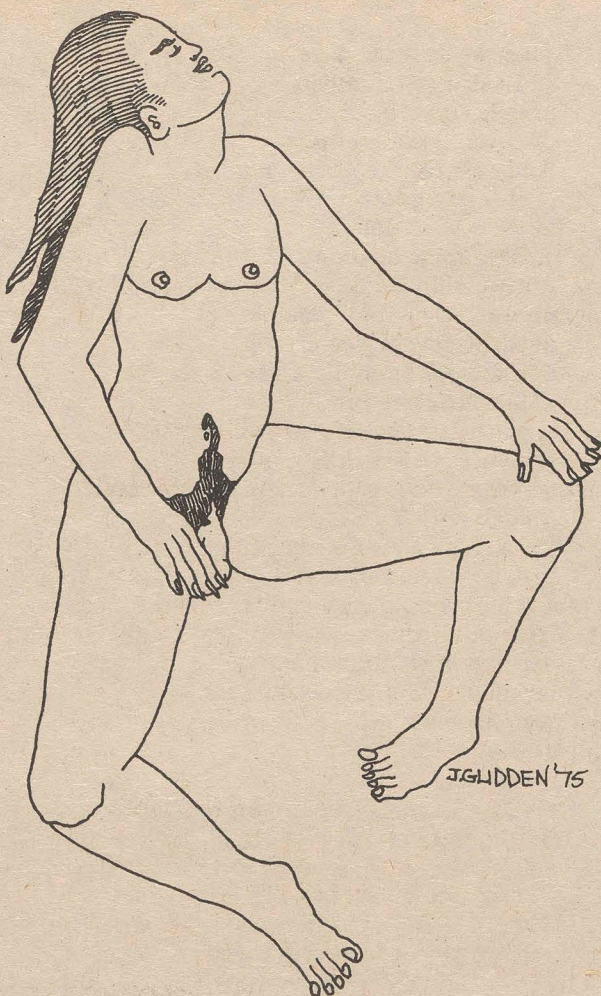
You got a hard rock
body, baby
Hard and cold like ice
you melt sometimes
Mostly you just stand there
like water in chains
no flow

—Joe Whitney

HEART'S EASE

Tonight, I sit
blankfaced and tearless,
sorting these old letters,
Reading what I then
could not understand.
An apple rests plaintively
on the table, near my hand,
yellow delicious, it
was your favorite,
with a bit of salt,
two glasses, buttermilk,
drained and forgotten,
till now.
Faint odor, your cologne,
Yes, I saved the bottle.
Would that surprise you?
It does me too, now.
The illusion has been sanctified,
rendered great at this table
and once again,
I watch you walk away
wild pansy,
heart's ease,
wide eyed, loose tongued
and spitting fire.

Randy Smallwood



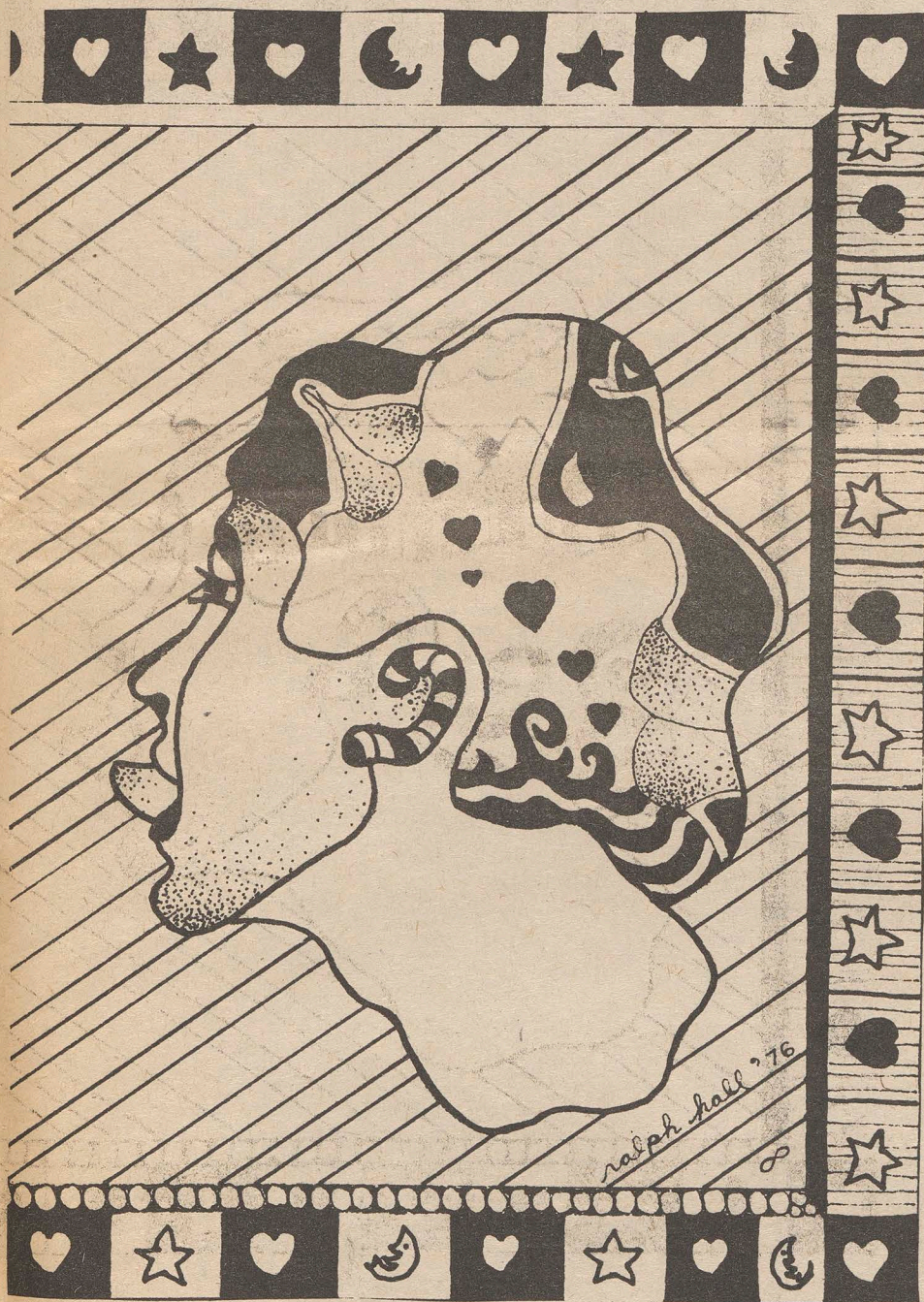
OUR LOVERS

Our lovers have been struck from the registers for
not voting,
they are demoted from their low-paying jobs.
They cheat at cards.
Our lovers take money from strangers to buy
cheap wine,
and forever lose their wristwatches. They forget
not to trust.
Our lovers have green eyes and brown, but never
blue.
They stretch out in shadows when the sun shines.
Their penises are long and curve to one side.

Our lovers go to bed with other men, but do not
love them very much.
They are stoned, sometimes, and cannot get it up.
Our lovers wear our clothes, and tear the pockets,
spilling soup on all the ties. They tell us,
Sorry, and kiss us on the mouth. Our lovers know
when to cry.
They comfort us. Their bodies complete our own.
Our lovers are the men our mothers loathe.

Our lovers hold their cocks with flaccid hands,
twisting in their sleep and crying out. They deny
bad dreams.
In the morning they pee and complain about sore
balls.
Our lovers cut photos of James Dean from a book
and paste them on the wall. They say they stopped
living when he died.
Our lovers are not sure what year they were born.
They lie, sometimes.
Our lovers let us love them, even so.

Tom Felt



Sporters

There's a blond side to the bar,
and there is a dark side.
There is a side where men eat potato chips,
a side where we smoke cigarettes.
Every few seconds a light goes on —
some machine — the pin-ball gurgles,
department store beep: a player
spending afternoon, in quarters.

It's dead of winter, but air-conditioning's on,
moving smoke
one place to another — where *does* it go?

Where do words go
when men don't say
'I need you.'
Where are words
when I cannot voice it,
go silent, and stick
another cigarette in instead.

Walta Borawski

"enough"

sometimes, and whenever
theirs social concern
i begin to get twisted and think that
i'm not happy in the life
could the p.t.a. be right,
and christmases are lonely
but, when i think for myself
i answer to absolute truth
and know it, for what it is
the so-called unnatural pain
feels good to me.
in rebelling i roar with awareness
and will defeat one with tear gas eyes,
and sharp machette tongue of protest.
now the deep of my soul is sweet and troubleless
i've grown up and out towards my
myth laden peers.
so i ask, why lay your uneasy detest on me.
or are you trying to hide our
similar waysides
account for your head dear neighbor
this is not a fad
it's life, real life
you bobbie sockers.

Clarence A. Harold, Jr.

TO WHOMEVER STOP PEE FROM FLOWING IN AMERICA

What has happen to America?
When pee isn't free/
When on looking eyes deprive pee's FREEDOM
To tell pee where to do it and who to do it for.
America, let us pee the way we want/ or
CASTRATE us Now, the way you have done
our FREEDOM.

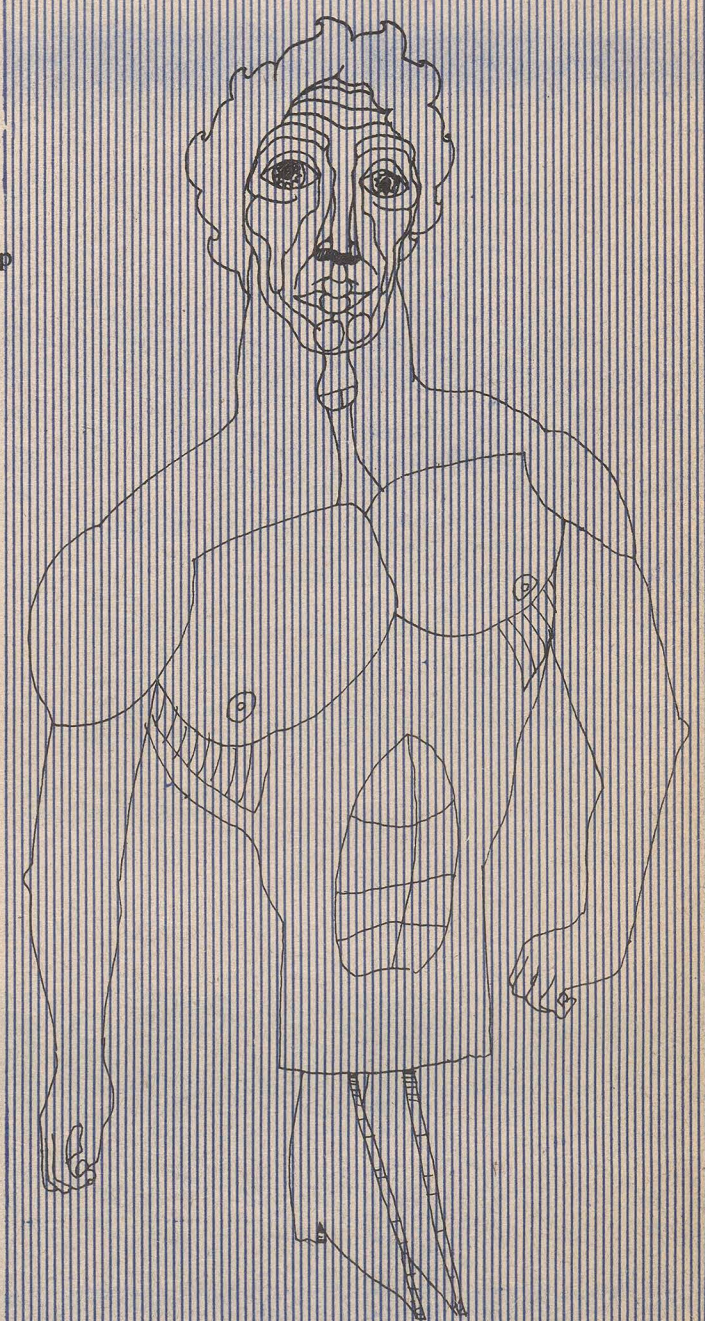
4. 7. 78.
boston, mass.
MIJO

ANYTHING BUT MURDER

I love him.
I hate him.
I love him.
I hate him.

He's a little more fem
than I usually prefer
but I like him.
He's too butch
with all those levis
and the dog whistle
on the choke chain
but I could learn
to appreciate him,
after all he's Harvard, Class
of 69. Well, if it's not
love it's not mutual aversion either.
Except for the fact he hustles
I would marry him
if he asked me
at Dignity. I don't expect
anything but I wouldn't mind
if he asked me to the GAA dance.
I don't usually cook this kind of meal,
but this pheasant flew
through my window and
ruined my spaghetti sauce.
We'd have it under glass
if I didn't just buy
a whole set of tupperware at the office.
Oral sex doesn't usually turn me on much
but I kind of like the way his lips
circle around the words with
the long o's in them.
I didn't even notice him
until he asked me if I wanted to get high.
It was five minutes to three
and we'd ignored each other
all night but then he did
this irresistible thing
that really turned me on
and I didn't think there was enough of me left
to be turned on,
but I beamed up for six plush minutes.

Then we said goodbye
and exchanged numbers
in case either of us
discovered symptoms.
And he gave the phone number
to this pay booth
in the bus station.
Then I knew he didn't really care.
But we didn't talk about a meaningful relationship
until our first play together
at the Kennedy Center.
The idea of adopting a gay foster child
didn't turn him on
but it has always been my dream.
I guess there's a little mother
(someone once called me a "leedle motha")
inside me.
He wouldn't give me back the ring.
I didn't want a used one anyway.
I was serious when I called him a hot number.
I told him I never went home with anyone
the first night I met him
but that I have this yacht
that we could sail
down to Peru
if he's serious
about wanting a meaningful relationship.
But he told me he was forty.
I thought you were nineteen or twenty.
I don't like to be cornered by anyone
without a drink in one hand
and the keys to a new XKE in my other.
I only charge busfare home.
I'm new in town,
just visiting,
so let's make a romantic evening of it
and never see each other again.
If I could only find the words.
If you'd only shut up.
I don't care how many trophies you won
for high school wrestling.
Diana Ross is the best singer in the world.
Barbra Streisand is the best singer in the world.
Judy Garland was the best singer in the world.
Marlena Deitrich is the best singer in the world.



So, your wife lets you out on weekends.
Any Wednesday.
Any weekend.
Any time, any place, anything.
Not tonight,
I have a headache,
I had a lousy day at work
and tomorrow starts too damn early.
Maybe.
But we have to go to your place
or my lover might try to have you
put away, put in place, removed, silenced,
he thinks I'm in Seattle
at the Young Socialists' Convention.
Or my parents might have us arrested.
He was okay.
He was a ten.
He was a seven.
He was a zero.
He fell asleep
after I blew him.
I thought he was pretty hot
until I kissed a needle mark.
I still can't remember his name.
He just wanted a place to crash.
Ten weeks later.
He's a refugee from a half-way house.
You can't judge a man by his cologne.
He made me listen to every album
Phil Spector ever had anything to do with.
Four days later I developed this incredible sore throat.
Six days later I had a drip.
Eleven days later the chancre appeared.
Two weeks later I woke up with this
fierce, burning itch.
Then the warts popped up.
Two months later my eyeballs turned yellow.
I'm catching up on all the rest
I've missed since I came out.
I'm looking for an alternative
to the bar scene.
By the time I find a lover
I'll be too old to get it up.
My friends say it's just growing pains.
Have you considered the baths?
I just want to see a good, old movie.
I want to stay home.
I want to go out.
I want to stay home.
I want to go out.

—Jim Everhard