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THE MESSENGER

SPRING 1990



1989-90 AWARDS

MARGARET HARRY COOPER PRIZE FOR POETRY

Occasion's Rec'd. Rich Miller
Fall 1989 issue

MARGARET OWEN PRIZE FOR CREATIVE WRITING

Fighting for Justice, Z.K. McMillan
Fall 1989 issue

THE MESSENGER

SPRING 1990

MARGARET HARRY COOPER PRIZE FOR POETRY

Chairman of Panel: Richard Harry
Spring 1990 issue

* Judges *

Richard Harry, Chairman, Student Grant Judge
Robert Smith, Vice-Chair, Student Grant Judge
Richard Rubenstein, Vice-Chair, Student Grant Judge

MEMORIALS

The 1989-90 awards were presented to the following for their

Richard Rubenstein, Vice-Chair, Student Grant Judge
Richard Rubenstein, Vice-Chair, Student Grant Judge
Richard Rubenstein, Vice-Chair, Student Grant Judge

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

Richard Rubenstein, Vice-Chair, Student Grant Judge
Richard Rubenstein, Vice-Chair, Student Grant Judge
Richard Rubenstein, Vice-Chair, Student Grant Judge

1989-90 AWARDS

- MARGARET HALEY CARPENTER PRIZE FOR POETRY •

Occam's Razor Rich Miller
Fall 1989 issue

- MARGARET OWEN FINCK PRIZE FOR CREATIVE WRITING •

Fishing for Turtles S.K. McMillan
Fall 1989 issue

- ARTWORK & PHOTOGRAPHY AWARD •

charcoal & pencil drawings Jerry Hanley
Spring 1990 issue

• JUDGING •

POETRY: Alan Loxterman, Margaret Morlier, Grant Mudge

PROSE: Steven Barza, Suzanne Jones, Sandy Tan

ARTWORK & PHOTOGRAPHY: Charles Johnson, Ephraim Rubenstein

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of Business Student Government Associations
The Margaret Owen Finck Prize for Creative Writing
The Margaret Haley Carpenter Prize for Poetry
University of Richmond Art Department
Steven Barza, Faculty Advisor
Aereopagus
Herbert Peterson, Controller
Tony Fleming, Collegian

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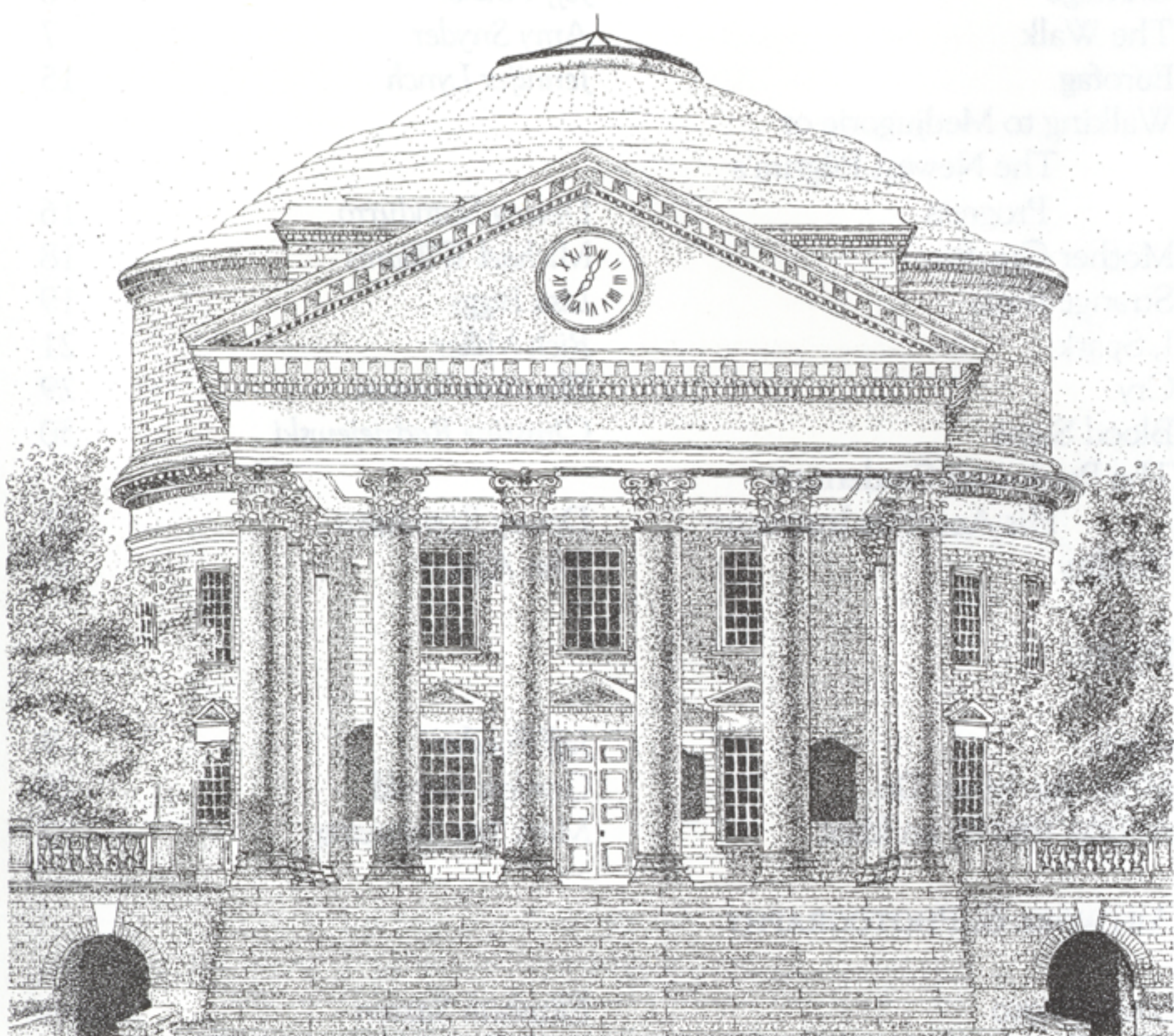
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A Prolonged Metaphor

"Who dropped diamonds in the water?"

I am observer.

I mediate the busy bustling chatter of the lake.

The wind puts its two cents in-
wins the topic of the debate.

Several ducks add their points of view,

And all is chaos for a moment,

Then the currents from behind the island restore order.

I bring up a new topic of interest,

And the sun, taking the thrust of the water's argument,

Gives a shimmering answer.

Sentinel trees skirt the edges of the conversation,

Seldom even causing ripples in the flow of things.

One of the ducks,

A mallard with purple on its wings,

Transfixed by something hidden
by the rhetoric of the ripples,

Plunges after it,

Making everyone turn and look at him.

The ripples, embarrassed and sliding quickly away,

Apologize to everyone else.

The wind, still in a jolly mood, changes the subject...

Satisfied, I gather my books and head for home.

Rich Miller

RC '92

Carnage

Clusters of overripe grapes.
A Greek chorus.
Dancing cupids covered
in flowing pink clouds.
ROMANS reciting Catullus.
Or the *Song of Solomon*
as read by Mother Theresa
might have been, at one time, fitting.
But now it's just you, me
And Madonna on the set
and some stained white sheets
(Plain. --not silk or satin).

And we writhe.
As jungle-drum hearts beat around
A brew of bubbling-over emotions.
And we whisper Typeean pygmy nymphs dancing
In the light of the flickering flames--
Dark tattooed bodies spinning beneath
The shadows of the breadfruit trees.
Feet, arms, hands, fingers, eyes all spirally gyrate
Generating *cannibal thoughts*,
Evolutionary movements
In which they slice us with smiles
And bind our bodies with our senses still bleeding,
Dripping kisses into the sacrificial cauldron
Cut by an edge of humanity
We should've fled from in terror.
But, we, the bloody tourists
Had to snap another roll
Of primal combustion
For widespread tabloid circulation
and, instead, tripped over some branches
and
fell in love.

Jeff Fowler
RC '91

Candidate for the Margaret Haley Carpenter Prize for Poetry

The Walk

It was so cold.

And there was ice, as hard as diamond, underfoot.

The snow was crust and killing cold

And the sky was gold with clouds.

The sidewalks went on forever.

Forever

Into silence.

And there was nothing in the cloud-shielded sky.

It was Void (?)

No, that sounds stupid.

It was just empty.

But empty is awful too.

I wanted stars to sing to, but there were only clouds.

And frozen air.

And so I walked.

And walked.

And walked and walked and walked and

Walked.

And there was still nothing.

Pain with empty frozen heart,

And tears that cannot (or will not) fall.

It seemed almost sublime,

But it wasn't.

It was only ordinary pain.

But ordinary pain is terrible too.

And so I walked

With frozen feet

(They don't hurt when they're frozen.)

And frozen cheeks

(You can't feel them when they're numb.)

And taffeta rustling under wool.

I walked and thought of nothing.

The sky was clearing above me.

White moon.

Dim stars.

I wanted to walk forever, until the stars were clear and bright.

continued

But I was freezing, and not that brave.
(Plus I had to go to the bathroom)
And so I turned back
To laughter and conversation
And a million tiny deaths.
The white moon was there,
But I climbed the icy steps to the porch
And quietly opened the door to warm electric light.

Did anyone notice ?

Amy Snyder
WC '93



Amy Snyder

Cycle

The rain was leaking into the prison cell, pummeling its makeshift metal frame. It beat, beat, beat, on the thin tin roof and leaked in the corners. Taylor's bare feet sunk into the cool mud floor as he struggled to stand up. It was nearing evening, or so he guessed, and he had just finished dinner. He was trying to stretch his bruised limbs that ached from the mid-afternoon beatings. Dark, purpled welts spotted his arms, legs, face, back, hands. His muscles were sore. A cut above his left eye made it impossible to see, not so much from the bleeding, but because it was so swollen. A cold ransacked his body with persistent sneezing and a dry cough that squeezed his chest. He rubbed his one good eye and fought the urge to lie down and sleep.

A wooden bowl lay empty on the ground. Taylor rolled his tongue over his front teeth to dislodge hardened pieces of rice caught between them. He had an itch in the small of his back which he found impossible to reach. Managing to rise enough to lean against the door of his cage, Taylor rubbed his back against it. The door had a small, square window, thatched with thin steel wires so thickly overlapped that it had the effect of a screen. This and the rain made it almost impossible for Taylor to see anything but incoherent forms and shadows as he strained to see out.

But he could tell they were coming again. He could see their forms approaching, bringing the blunt ends of their guns, the steel tips of their boots, their fists, the backs of their hands. They were coming to torture, to inflict pain, to bring anguish. They were coming and he could see their forms approaching. He coughed. Slowly, he collapsed to his knees and looked up, beyond the roof and the rain which sent tiny droplets down on his head. He looked up into the face of God, into the face of whatever person or power he felt could see his unshaved, cut, swollen, bleeding face: the thing or being that could tell what was going through his mind.

He prayed. Silently.

Taylor gasped. The blunt end of a gun jabbed his tender ribs. He groaned. Callous hands grabbed his fingers and twisted them. There was a snap. Taylor screamed. A fist sent him into the mud and a heavy boot kicked into his ribs, kicked his butt, kicked the side of his head, and kicked and kicked and kicked...

There were words spoken--shouted. Angry words. Taylor heard them only faintly. He was elsewhere, talking with a close friend in a taxi in New York City, slowly caressing the curves of his wife's soft breasts, holding

her hand as they walked through the sand as the sun sank into the ocean, hearing the squeals and giggles of his son as he pushed him on the swing in the park, feeling the sudden pull against his seat as his fighter plane peeled off into the horizon, watching his mother make sour dough bread for--

A gun fired. The soldiers left the cell empty. The door lay open. Taylor was free.

II

Doug took another swing at the tall oak. It towered above him. But soon it'd be on its way to the fireplace, he thought. Swing after swing, but the oak still stood. It was the third tree he and his father had felled today and it was beginning to rain so it would probably be their last. Doug didn't mind the rain, but Momma always was fussing for them that they would catch a cold if they stood out in the rain too long.

Doug looked up at the tree and rubbed his eyes. They were still sore from getting up at 6 a.m. He looked forward to waking up late on Sunday. He watched some birds land on the branches of the oak, black specks flying off into the gray sky as he gave the tree a final blow and Taylor swung slowly to the ground.

III

Five-year-old Harry's brown eyes widened as he saw the elephant. He leaned back against his mother's tall legs, his small fists gripping the folds of her pants. He stood on her feet and she walked him closer to the cage.

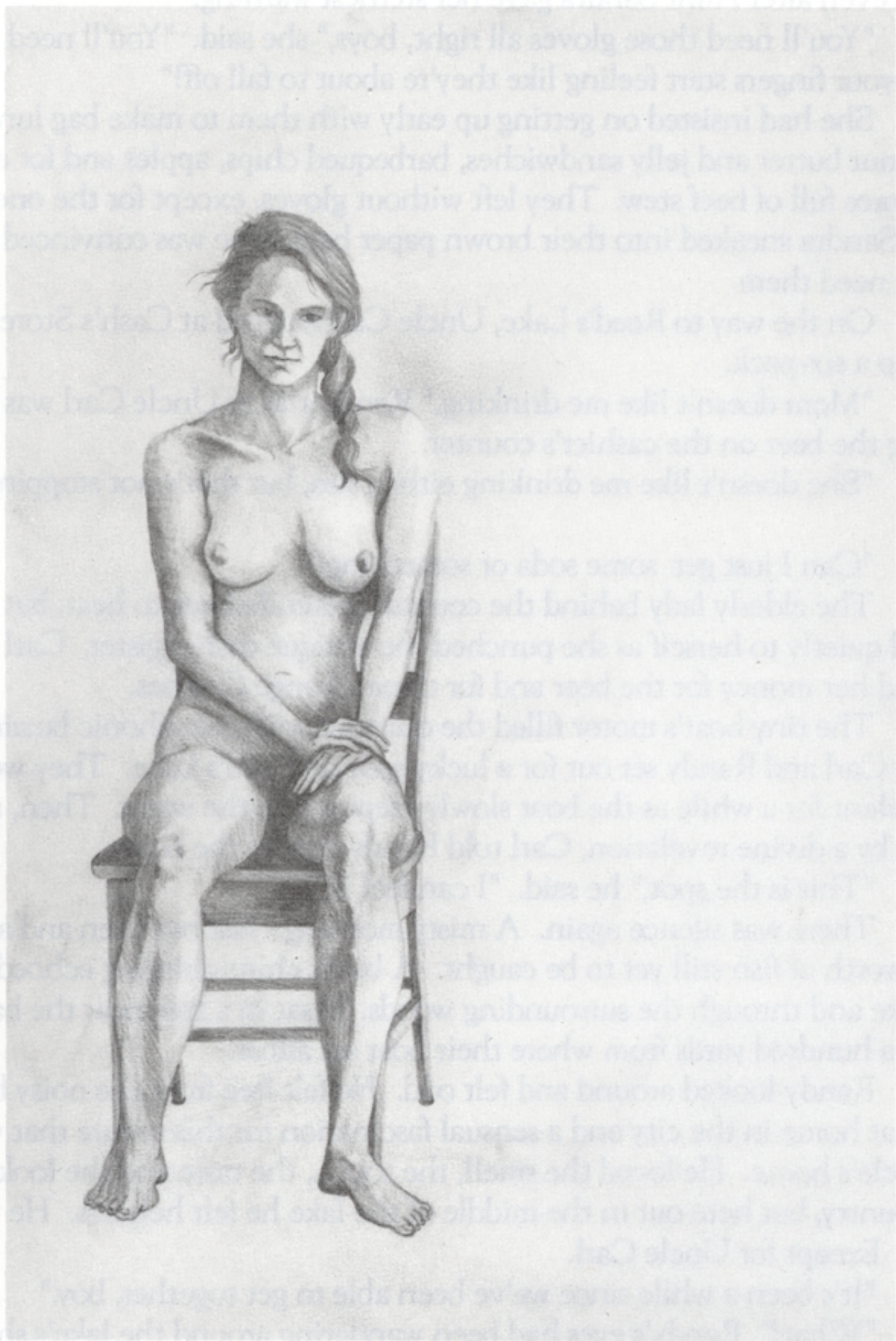
"See the big elephant?" she said and mussed his light, blond hair. Harry smiled, showing his neat, little baby teeth that always reminded her of fangs.

"Harry, my little monster, what do you think of this big thing, huh?" She pointed to the elephant and looked down at Harry. A pained expression came over his face, disturbing his picture-book features.

"Oh, come on, you little baby. Let's get some cotton candy." Harry looked up at his mother and grinned a huge grin, giggling.

As they walked away from the elephant cage, a lone ant began its trek toward a pool of spilt soda. As the ant scurried toward the sticky patch, Harry glanced down and followed it with his eyes.

Still holding his mother's hand, Harry took a bouncing hop and pulverized Taylor with the soles of his miniature Reeboks.



IV

The morning was chilly when Uncle Carl and Randy set out to do some real man's fishing. Both, though, had insisted that they wouldn't need gloves even after Aunt Sandra gave her sternest warning.

"You'll need those gloves all right, boys," she said. "You'll need them when your fingers start feeling like they're about to fall off!"

She had insisted on getting up early with them to make bag lunches of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, barbequed chips, apples and for each, a thermos full of beef stew. They left without gloves, except for the ones Aunt Sandra sneaked into their brown paper bags. She was convinced they'd need them

On the way to Reed's Lake, Uncle Carl stopped at Cash's Store to pick up a six-pack.

"Mom doesn't like me drinking," Randy said as Uncle Carl was setting the beer on the cashier's counter.

"She doesn't like me drinking either, son, but that's not stopping me."

"Can I just get some soda or something?"

The elderly lady behind the counter pretended not to hear, but smiled quietly to herself as she punched the antique cash register. Carl handed her money for the beer and for three Orange Crushes.

The tiny boat's motor filled the quiet air with cacophonous buzzing as Uncle Carl and Randy set out for a lucky spot on Reed's Lake. They were both silent for a while as the boat slowly crept across the water. Then, as if struck by a divine revelation, Carl told Randy to stop the boat.

"This is the spot," he said. "I can feel it."

There was silence again. A misty morning. Just two men and a day's worth of fish still yet to be caught. A bird's chirp-chirping echoed over the lake and through the surrounding woods. It sat in a tree near the bank, about a hundred yards from where their boat sat afloat.

Randy looked around and felt odd. He felt free from the noisy buzz of life at home in the city and a sensual fascination for this nature that was his uncle's home. He loved the smell, the touch, the taste and the look of the country, but here out in the middle of the lake he felt helpless. He felt alone. Except for Uncle Carl.

"It's been a while since we've been able to get together, boy."

"What?" Randy's eyes had been wandering around the lake's shore, looking for the tree where the chirping bird sat, hoping to see it, to make the connection between that chirping and an actual living thing.

"It's been a while since I've seen you," Uncle Carl repeated.

"Oh. Yeah. Sure has."

"I'm glad that we get to spend some time together."

"Uh-huh."

"Your mother doesn't like me too much, but that doesn't mean we can't be friends, right?"

"Yeah, sure. I suppose it doesn't."

A silence passed between them for a bit and again the sound of the bird and other birds echoed over the lake. A breeze blew. The lake rippled. A fish flopped its tail out of the water, making a plop sound and Randy thought he could feel a drop on his hand.

"Do you know how to bait a hook, Randy?"

"Sure do."

"O.K. Here you go, then." He handed Randy one of the fishing rods.

Randy took out a wiggly purple and yellow plastic lure from the tackle box and carefully put it on his hook. Carl did the same with the largest worm that Randy had ever seen. They both cast their rods from either side of the boat.

A large fish swam in the general direction of the boat. It sensed movement in the water and thought about breakfast. It swam closer to the movement and saw a strange-looking creature bobbing around. Good enough, the fish thought and with a quick bite he felt a jabbing pain ripping through his mouth. He felt a pull towards the surface. He felt his gills beat furiously. He felt his tail beat madly about. He felt himself swimming as fast as he could away from the surface, but a strength kept pulling him towards the water's edge, and overwhelming strength.

Human hands grabbed his convulsing body as Taylor felt air. The hand slid the hook out of his mouth.

"That's a pretty big one, Randy. Can't wait till we get that sucker fried up."

Randy put the fish into a large container filled with water from the lake. He rebaited his hook and cast again.

V

Tai-Lee dispatched the messenger with a curt bow. The news was good. It was no longer necessary to torture the prisoner. Central Command had threatened to kill all prisoners if the enemy did not stop its needless

killing in Jeu-Piong. The enemy had persisted. The prisoner would be killed. Snapshots of the tortured victim lay scattered across Tai-Lee's desk. They were to be sent to the enemy to follow the others, a message of rebellion and indignation. Taylor was a national hero and if there was a way to circulate the pictures, the enemy would be sure to feel pressure from its own people to end the violence.

Tai-Lee sat down on his wooden chair. Drops of rain leaked through the thin, tin roof and beat persistently in his eardrums. He had a headache. His neck was sore. He had not slept in three days. A voice called to him, but he did not notice at first. His mind was elsewhere-- having a home-cooked meal in the now-ruined village of Zi-Zhing, the place of his birth, slowly caressing the gentle curves of his wives' breasts, hearing his son giggle and laugh as he ran with the other children through the village square, receiving the medal of valor for excellence and courage in the battle of Peuo...

"Commander, should we kill the prisoner?"

Tai-Lee looked up from his desk. "Yes, we should," he said. His voice was tired, but firm.

The prisoner had been badly beaten and already would be dead soon if the torture persisted. Tai-Lee heard a group of soldiers muttering in somber tones as they walked through the thick rain. They entered the prisoner's cell and then there were the sounds of pain.

He watched, his face revealing no emotion. Torture was never a pleasant sight for Tai-Lee. They were hurting him badly and finally, as the soldiers kept kicking and kicking and kicking the prisoner, Tai-Lee called for an end.

A gun was fired. He and his soldiers walked silently out of the empty cell and buried Taylor in the mud.

Jeff Fowler
RC '91

Eurofag

She sits behind me
heavy sighing
because someone
has mispronounced
femme fatale.

She tells him,
"In France we say 'femme fatale,'"
enunciating each delicate syllable
s l o w l y
and
deliberately.

A mocking voice
from the back of the room
reminds her that
"we"
are not in France.

The color rising from under her
lily-white
(cadaver-white)
cheeks
blends nicely with
her very bright and very hot
red Chanel lipstick.

And I wonder if her Hermes scarf
feels like a
noose
as she resumes eating her
Cheetos.

Jennifer Lynch
WC '90

Walking to Medjugorje
or
The Newest Pilgrim's Progress

The July sun forces its way through the contents of my pack
(Oreos for the village children and
Biros and Marlboros for their parents,
tools of the trade for the Young American Traveller
hoping to win the humble shelter of a barn
at the end of the pilgrimage)
And into the sweaty chafed skin of my back.

High in the distance on Krizevac stands the cross built by the people
(climbing barefoot up through the thorny undergrowth
clearing with their flesh the Path that I will follow
and carrying the individual Stones of the Cross
and telling their Beads and begging for Mercy)
To mark the nineteen hundredth anniversary of the Crucifixion.

The mountain road beneath my bare feet
(they have walked across the Dalmatian countryside,
been burned by the fiery asphalt and bloodied by the sharp gravel
and purified by the Rain
so they may enter The Church
and see The Children
and climb The Mountain
and support my weary body as I fix my eyes on the
Spinning Sun)

Winds around a corner and I finally see the distant village.

I enter the village where a family
(who tell me of
Rosaries that turn to gold
and Blind Eyes Seeing
and Crippled Legs Walking
and the crutches thrown aside
and The Children and The Visions
of The Virgin and Her Secrets

continued

and The Crosses and The Sun
that are Spinning in The Sky)

Offer me a room and a meal,
Before I have a chance to mention the meager gifts that I bring.

Dewey Scandurro
RC '90

Candidate for The Margaret Haley Carpenter Prize for Poetry



Mother-Creature

Organic dream Mother;
Scales and fire-tongue,
caresses lightly
in unconscious halls of memory.

Now waking, claws and serpentine tentacle
Lash out from ancient tree-lined cavern;
Tentacle like tree, like heat...
Like sphinx that crawls starving across burning sand.
Sea of sand, she is nurtured by omniscience,
With eyes that are a crystalline, reflected ocean.

Lost on the shore of such an ocean
The cry is swallowed by the bestial, prehistoric wail
Of river at delta, meeting point, feeding...
Helpless I watch such unmeasured power.
The tide, ebbing flow, washes over becoming me;
The multifarious quality of atmosphere reflects a world.

World a spider web maze as her eyes become like the Sun.
Then she is so weak. Lost in the ocean-gaze I am now
Scorched by a heat that is the fiery orb...
Hydrogen, oxygen, gaseous, sentient.
So weak but secure in her embrace, tangible at last;
So real in her warmth that soothes the blistered skin.

Now I am the Mother-Creature, with wings of steel
And dreams of fleeing this earth of amorphous forms.
for a thousand years I have been Mother-Creature,
Dreaming silently behind dark and lifeless eyes
Of a vision, of belief, and of a bottomless sea.

Michael Williams
RC '93

Strange Birds

Flamingos
Flaming feathers
Of fluorescent pink
Pairs of long legs
Dancing a flamenco
As Andrés Segovia
Sits in the reeds
And strums his guitar
On the sandy shore
Of the Mediterranean
In the south of Spain
Picasso is nearby
Putting the colors
Of the fiery sunset
Onto his canvas
Finding Surrealism
In the surrounding scene
Of hot pink flamingos
Dancing with Dalí
While Segovia plays

Lisa Biggs
WC '93

Mimi See Mimi Do

I am spying on Mimi and Mommy in the produce section of the market. Mimi's fencing opponent is the formidable watermelon and her weapon of choice is the nimble carrot.

"Mimi, I told you not to touch anything!" Mommy yells, bringing her back to reality with a quick slap to the head.

Mimi calmly endures the blow, but I shudder as I hear the thunderous smack echoing through the generations.

Mimi mimics Mommy.

Gordon Herold
RC '90



I, Spark

I, Spark,
Glide upon the ether.
I waft upon the winds,
 buoyed by their playful giddiness.

I streak across the heavens,
Burning a slash through an indigo velvet firmament.

I run a tightrope,
Leaping and rounding corners
In this thinking labyrinth you built for me.

I rise and set in your azure sky.

I flash from the flat of an upraised blade,
And wash over polished armor before an expectant battlefield.

I play and frolic with my brethren
Over a lazily rolling stream;
Teasing and leading a kitten.

I am wracked with sudden inexplicable pain.
Ecstasy sunders me.
I am unwillingly encased in form,
And trapped for a time -- seconds? decades?
Growing and changing;
Replicating and specializing;
Until I am wracked again-
Amid thunderous ripples I am free again,
And wail-
In a doctor's arms.

Rich Miller
RC '92

Candidate for the Margaret Haley Carpenter Prize for Poetry

A Tale Told by an Idiot

He was hunched over a dusty law book in the dry and empty library. His head felt like a bundle of gray marble shards and scraps of legal notes bound by a rope that seemed to be disintegrating into an airy ashen powder. Red ants crawled inside his eyes looking for a way out, and his nasal passages flared with each sulfurous breath.

He felt as if he were in a Picasso painting. The twisting silence was becoming unbearable; the rest of the law students must have taken the professor's sage advice not to cram before finals, but to get a good peaceful night's sleep. It would not be a good night for Winston Kingstone Manners the Fourth.

Winston rose to take a refresher. Staggering past the millions of casebooks, case reports, legal periodicals, and treatises, he thought he heard someone laughing. After finally finding a bathroom, Winston slipped into a stall, reached into his backpack and pulled out a silk pouch. He placed the silver mirror on his knees, cut four chalky strands, brought straw and mirror to his nose and inhaled. He closed his eyes, tilted his head back, and remembered bygone days when he could have gotten better coke for the same price.

"Baking soda. Bush is screwing up everything."

He returned to his desk and resumed studying. Realizing the coke was not inspiring him, he began to wonder if this was cocaine all. His mind drifted to Lori and he felt the rope around his head transforming into a steel cable. He shook his head and decided to find the memoirs of a dead defense attorney named Lavatch on Barnum vs. New York in the Biography section. New York was just another reminder.

"I hate New York. Why does the bitch have to go to school there? I saw her once this semester. Once. She can't blame me for sleeping around."

As he walked through the dim library, every step tightened the cable around his head. He stopped half way down the row, took a long breath, and then resumed his search. Every stride down the dim Biography aisle broke off splinters of gray marble in his head. He was almost there; the call numbers were increasing. The numbers rose, and the cable shrunk.

"LA 174.23, LA 174.45, LA 175.02. What the...?"

A small black book was on the shelf where Lavatch's biography should have been. The publisher's logo, a jester with a book in his hand, appeared on the lower part of the binding in place of the call number's white tab. His eyes searched the rest of the shelf, then checked the number in his

notes. He pulled out the book and read the title: The Life and Times of Winston Kingstone Manners the Fourth. Smiling, Winston opened the book close to the middle and saw there was nothing on the pages. He flipped through the beginning pages; only the first quarter of the book had handwritten words. Studying the words, he recognized his own handwriting.

“The Christmas gift for the man who has everything. And I do have everything. Simulated handwriting. My Mom and her Christmas presents.”

Feeling that familiar rush, he now knew this was good coke hitting him after all. Ribbons of silk cradling diamonds slumbered like a crown on his shoulders. He rushed up the stairs to his desk.

“This is great. Screw finals and law school. Mom always wanted me to be a screwed up artist, anyway. Maybe Father will change his mind.”

He sat down, shifted comfortably, and slowly turned the cover page. Winston frowned when he read the author’s name.

“Feste? One of those names from Milton or some other idiot I read when I was an English major.”

He realized he had been talking to himself aloud all night and blushed. He told himself that he didn’t care. He turned to the first page:

“Winston Kingstone Manners the Fourth was conceived in the back seat of a 1964 Thunderbird after his parents’ senior formal at 11:23 p.m. on May 12, 1966. Mr. Manners, not concerned about protection, was forcing himself on the not-yet Mrs. Manners who was too drunk to object. She had just been rebuffed by one of Winston’s rommmates studying art and had thought sleeping with Winston would make Bill jealous. It seems only fitting that such a clumsy and moronic event inaugurated a life full of mistakes and cruelty.”

Winston’s face slowly turned an burning red as he reread the first sentences. He began to rave aloud.

“What the hell is this? Who wrote this crap? What kind of idiot would write one hundred pages of this bullshit?”

As he frantically read on, Winston slipped more and more into a nightmare. His breath was irregular and shallow. His heart was loud and low. Some of his anger slowly curled into fear. Whoever had written this knew him all too well. For some, the truth is no Christmas present.

For the next three and a half hours, Winston was in his own

personal hell in the coolness of the dim library. He felt the cable loosening and shards of marble and scraps of knowledge slipping out of their shackles. Among the pages of his life were slivers of glassy evils and wrongs he had done. Throwing rocks through windows, beating smaller children, and stealing friends' playthings passed hauntingly as ghostly elementary memories. He had not thought of these events in years and the distance and the regained clarity scared the hell out of him. His biographer furiously exorcised yesterdays from their graves with commanding mockery as if all of them would eventually rise somehow and somewhere against him. The beaten black boy, the date-raped freshman, and the threatened homosexual all stood over his shoulders and turned pages of his intermediated memory that had been stuck together by repression. The plagiarized papers, the stolen LSAT test, and finally the broken promise to Lori ignited his memory and stung his eyes that were sinking deep into his head and memory with no indication of slowing down. This was his life so far. An inferno of dishonesty and narcissism.

"Who knows all this? I mean who knows all this really happened? I can't get in trouble. There's no proof, this is just a book!"

He finished the printed section; or thought he had. Words suddenly rose up on what was once seen as a blank page.

"...yet the only good thing in his life was slipping away. For the short three months they had gone out before law school, Lori brought the best out of Winston. Lori, who had always been suspicious of some side of Winston she had never seen before, was falling in love with another man. Her doubts about Winston she blamed falsely on her fear of falling in love. She couldn't help falling for Pete. Working his way through graduate school as a small-time comic, Pete was a young scholar, with soft, warm eyes and a scruffy face, studying Shakesperean literature in New York at..."

"She is in love with that loser Peter! The artsy-fartsy fag I met in New York? That bitch! What is this now? A fucking Harlequin romance?"

"After seeing *Dead Poets Society*, they walked through the Village in the rain. They shared a bottle of wine in Pete's cluttered single room apartment. They talked about everything that was funny, sad, and true. After Pete said something to the effect that he couldn't talk to some strange woman in a bar since he would only be thinking of her, she kissed him. They passionately made love on the floor. Both had wanted to secretly for

months... Feeling a surprisingly strong bond to him for such a sort time of knowing him, Lori realized she had never felt more happy in a man's arms..."

The enraged Winston shoved the black book into his backpack, and ran for the telephone by the entrance of the library. With inaccurate fingers, he dialed her number collect.

"Will you accept a call from Winston?"

"Ah... Yeah. Yes. Winston?"

"Well, I hope I didn't disturb anything! You aren't fucking Peter now, are you?"

"What?"

"I've been reading this 'Life of Me' book where you fuck Peter the Shakespearean faggot! I thought we couldn't sleep with anyone else?"

"What book? What are you talking about?"

"Just answer yes or no! Are you fucking Peter or not?"

There was a pause. A silent suspended pause.

"I wanted to talk to you about this after finals."

"Fuck finals. I'm failing anyway. You fucked him."

"Stop it! Stop using that word!"

"What word? You mean 'fuck'? Oh yeah, I forgot! You made *love* to him! How *fucking* romantic!"

"I know you're upset, but if you use that word one more time, I'm hanging up!"

"Well, let me tell you something, my virginal mistress. I've *fucked* three different bitches this semester and they all had better bodies than you!"

"That's it, you hypocrite! I can't believe you're acting this way. I even thought you might have cried. Goodbye!"

"I don't cry over sluts like you!"

Winston slammed down the receiver and ripped open his backpack. He rummaged through his notebooks, Blackstone's condensed dictionary, and textbooks. The black book was not there.

"Where in hell did it go? God damn it! God damn it!"

Winston threw the contents of his pack around the foyer. His head twisted from side to side with the final gray shards and notes flying out, scattering and then disappearing before they touched the ground. Suddenly, he caught a glimpse of an image, a figure through the window, outside. He squinted. The steamed windows and cold night air made it difficult to see what precisely it was. With no concern for his belongings, he charged through the doors. He now saw what it was. A smiling harlequin

waved the black book in his hand.

In the silence, they stood staring at each other. Winston's face was stony and grim while the harlequin's face was soft and cheerful. The fool, in his motley clothes and his three-belled cap, startled Winston when he began dancing and laughing in the dark night. Winston stared hard and saw it was Pete's face under the cap, the face he was introduced to two months ago in New York.

"How now, gentle lawyer."

"You fucking idiot! Give me back that book! You fucked up me and Lori!"

"Bring me a violin! Bring me a cello!

I am not Iago, you are not Othello!"

"Shut up you queer Shakespearean faggot! Give me that goddamn book or I'll beat the shit out of your sorry ass!"

Winston charged the clown. The clown casually pulled a fistful of blank pages from the book and threw them directly at the approaching Winston. Halfway before reaching Winston, the white papers ignited. Winston fell to the ground while the flaming blank pages of his life flew over his head. He felt sick in a way he had never felt before; he experienced a certain fear, the fear of the eternity. He knelt before the jester and heard his three belled cap clinking in the dark wind. The jester ripped single pages out of the book and for each page Winston moaned. Stumbling to his feet, he approached the jester.

"Pete, man, you can have Lori. Just give me the book...please."

"In borrowed robes, you dress me!

Oh, what fools these mortals be!

By the pricking of my thumb!

These law students sure are dumb!"

The fool, tearing out more pages and watching them light up, skipped off happily away from the weakening Winston. Trying to catch his breath, he slowly stumbled after the fool.

"Look, I don't know how you know all this shit on me, but I know you want Lori. Don't rip pages while I'm talking to you. Look, I was an English major at Dickinson. Shakespeare is cool. I even thought about being an English professor once. Are you trying to kill me?"

"Give this man a crown for his eggy head!

First thing done, killed lawyers are dead!

Shake your love, throw your spear!

Dead is dead is dead, said rosy King Lear!"

"You are so fucked up! What do you want, huh? Money? Here, I'll give you some. Dude, name your price, just give me back the book. Okay? Mr. Joker? Are you listening to me? God damn it! Just name your price. Answer me!"

"Hearts before diamonds, clubs before spades.

Love before money, murder before graves."

"What the fuck is that supposed to mean?!"

The fool smiled, bounced to a nearby apartment building, and began to climb the black fire escape. Winston decided to grab the book the first chance he got as he weakly crept after the fool. The fool scaled the steel stairs, jumped from the escape to a window ledge, sat down, and resumed tearing out the book's white pages one by one. Pacing himself, Winston clambered up the escape while burning pages plunged past him to the ground. Finally at the top of the stairs, trying to catch his breath, Winston, flustered, contemplated whether or not he could make the fool's leap to the ledge.

"Voyeurs and a window! Lawyers and a jury!

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury!

Words, words, words! Shadows and their tale.

By breath of unfed lawyers, leaping lords often fail."

"Look man. We are one in the same. I could have been a lot like you. I recognize all that shit. *Macbeth*, ah, *Hamlet*. Right? 'The Twelve Days of Christmas.' I'm feeling really sick so cut me a break. Dude? I don't fucking believe this! Stop ripping out pages, you asshole! You're killing me!"

Winston desperately jumped trying to grab hold of the fool, but there was nothing there, only a shadow. Winston only ripped the last blank page out of the book and clutched it in his hand down five long stories to his dusty death.

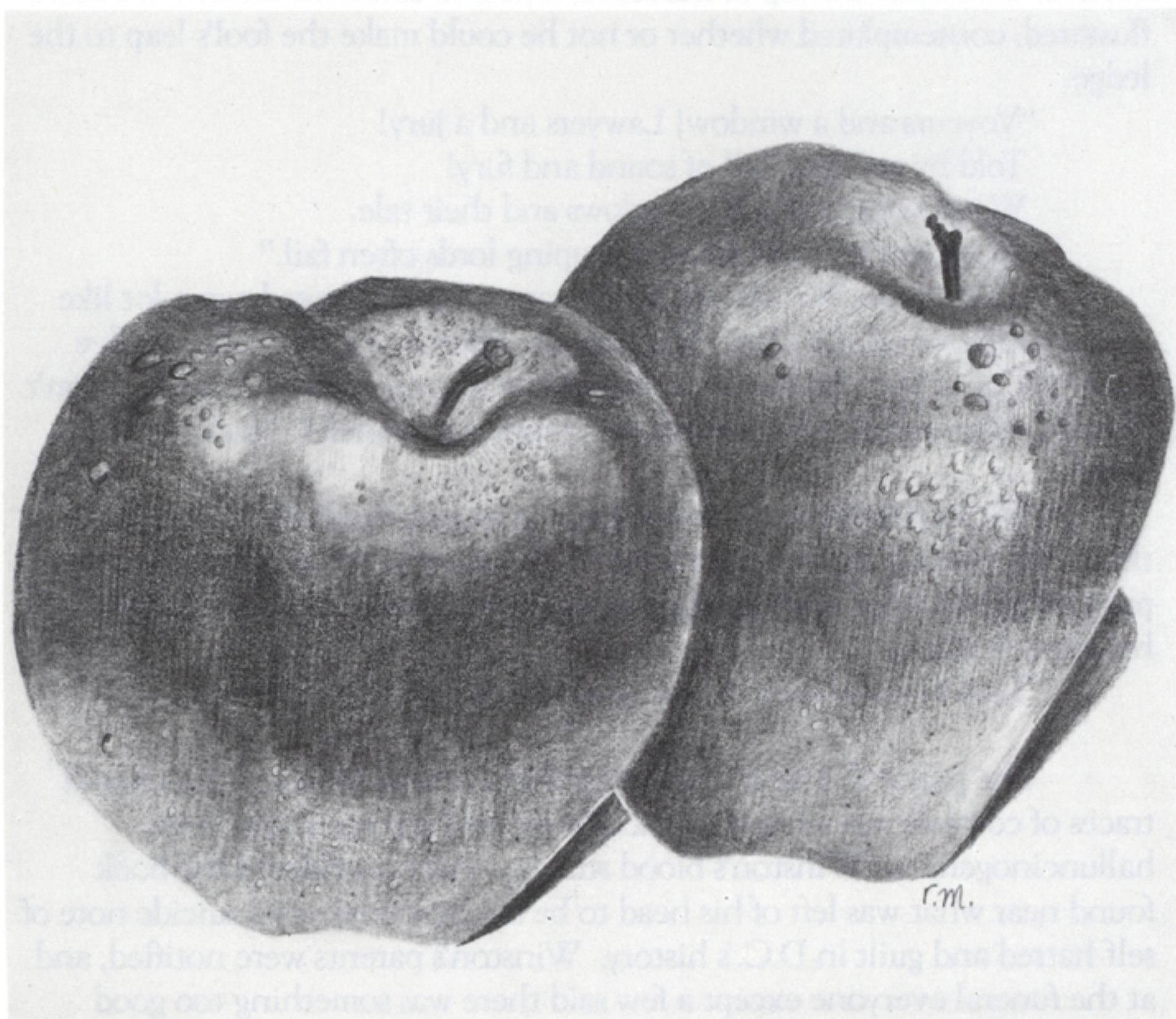
"I am better than thou art now. I am a Fool, thou art nothing."

The police the next morning gathered the evidence. They found traces of cocaine and what they thought might be some sort of new hallucinogenic in Winston's blood stream. They considered the book found near what was left of his head to be the most elaborate suicide note of self-hatred and guilt in D.C.'s history. Winston's parents were notified, and at the funeral everyone except a few said there was something too good about Winston for this world.

Lori cried many nights and Pete was understanding. They attended

the funeral together. Slowly, the guilt and pain left Lori. Tall tales and long stories do kill. On earth, the law of gravity, never appealed, still reigns equally over everyone. For this world is only a fool's paradise where poetic justice resides supreme, a paradise only for fools in love.

Mark Ian Schwartz
RC '90



Cry

Cry

When the sun

Sinks into

the blackness

of the horizon,

and dies.

Cry knowing

she'll again rise above the horizon

coloring your fallen tears

that during the night

have lost bitterness and turned to

spectral pools of dew.

Elizabeth Saxton

WC '90

Blood Signs

You eye me askance because I am losing my sight
in the droplets that are gouging my face.
You do not realize that, for now, I do not care
what happens to you and I will not until the
marquis that bears the outlines of my name
stops dripping blood onto the pavement.
It is drizzling into the cracks of the sidewalk
and I am trying to blend my tears with its ooze
but I cannot seem to make them fall on the stains.
My nose is abrading the asphalt now as I chase the
streams running toward the curb but my face bruises
as it hits the gutter and I rise holding my eye.
I can see that the sign has dripped its fill and
that the copper trails have spelt your name.

Christine Radziejewski
WC '90

The Passionate Student to His Aerobics Instructor

Come live with me and be my love,
And I for you the world will move.
Your red lipstick will bless my lips
At the Mud Bog Championships.

Some Clorox bleach to fix your roots,
Some Lycra shorts to show your gleuts,
Press-On nails for finger and toe,
To you these gifts will I bestow,

Some lacy stockings, all in black
A sleazy dress with open back,
And sticking out below the hem,
A garter belt from Classy Femme.

We'll lie before my fireplace
Its heat will warm your made-up face,
And I will run my hand, with care,
Through bleached and frizzy, mousse-filled hair.

You'll soon forget your reps and sets
And peel from me my sweaty sweats.
Forget your metabolic stack,
I'll raise your heart rate on your back,

I'll work your Epiladied thighs,
We'll celebrate endorphine highs.

If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

Dewey Scandurro
RC '90

Viridity

Roots and vines have split Angkor.
Fibrin clotting a festering sore.
Machu Picchu now crumbles and cracks
As jungle obscures the kepu tracks.
Grasses grow through Sintra's stones;
The Moorish banshee wails and moans.
The lichen patch on a wall in Queens
Is a patient vanguard for an army of green.

John Aguiar

RC '92



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SPRING 1990

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