

THE CAPITANO REVIEW



*"I want my work to see into my own time,
and I feel the necessity of seeing into one's own time,
of making clear the consequences of what's been done
and what is being done."*

— BRIAN FAWCETT

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COVER

Tim Porter

Sandra Bartlette / SHORT STORY

Mother made a new apron the day after she and Father quarreled and he slammed the door and went walking. She didn't come away from the kitchen window for a long time and I tiptoed around the house feeling nervous because she hadn't noticed that it was past my bedtime.

She was wearing the apron when she met the doctor's wife, Mrs. Hallman, out by the clothes line, only you couldn't see it for the pouch of clothes pegs tied around her thick waist. Mrs. Hallman stood tall and slim, her red toenails sticking out the end of her white sandals and she smelled like the sweet william that grew in a patch beside the back porch. I hung around like a sticky fly in August, and listened while they talked. Mother played with the pegs in the pouch and made little squares in the dirt with her foot while Mrs. Hallman said how pleased she was to be living in the country instead of the city, so much nicer for the children, didn't she think? Then she asked which one I was and Mother told her, Lureen the fifth of ten and one was coming.

Mrs. Hallman said, "Oh how nice," her Jane Russell lips forming a raspberry circle and I wished suddenly that Mother would take off the pouch so the ric rac on the apron would show. Mrs. Hallman patted her flat stomach and told Mother that it sure was good to be slim again and that was IT for her. Then she laughed and her voice went high and tinkly like a wind chime. Mother laughed too, and her laughter was like rubbing two stones together.

At supper Mother said to Father that the kids were terrible. And how could she invite Mrs. Hallman in? He hadn't built the cage he'd promised now for a month and Butchie let Jeepers loose again in the kitchen and the twins wouldn't come down from the table. She'd offered Mrs. Hallman some tomatoes, but they're allergic to tomatoes, and it was too bad, but she couldn't play bridge with Mrs. Hallman because she had better things to do with her time.

When Mrs. Hallman came for coffee, Mother would send me to the cellar for a jar of jelly and spread a clean table cloth. Then she would sit drawing circles with her finger, smiling and nodding while Mrs. Hallman rattled her charm bracelet and talked about Toronto, and Minneapolis and "my husband the doctor". I would sit listening to her wind chime laughter unable to move when told to go out and play with the others.

When Mrs. Hallman left, Mother would bang pots and pans on the stove or put on Father's fishing hat and chop weeds in the garden making chunks of earth fly up around her feet.

The oldest daughter, Barbara, and I became friends. She played store with real groceries and let me watch. She had bubble gum and pop whenever she wanted it and sometimes gave me sips. She had her own bicycle and she wouldn't let me ride it. I gave up my perch in the maple tree where I'd spent the summer building a tree house and began moping about the kitchen complaining of having nothing to do. When I asked Mother why we didn't have one measly bike she slammed the oven door hard and said stoves were more important than bicycles, and if we ever got anything new around this house it would be a stove that works right.

Then Butchie tried fly casting at the telephone wires and caught a fish hook in his finger. Mother sent me to the Hallmans and the doctor said he'd come over and then stayed to have a slice of fresh bread, his eyes never leaving the cupboard where Mother had piled her batches of bread and buns. And when he asked if it was really true, did she really make that delicious bread, she smiled at him the way she smiles at Father when he pulls the little curl on the back of her neck and says she's keeping her girlish figure.

The doctor stood in the door with two loaves of our bread under his arm and asked if they could have the recipe. He said some more and Mother laughed high and tinkly like the wind chimes and said she'd always wanted to play bridge, she'd just never had anyone offer to teach her and yes, she'd be glad to give him the recipe.

She sent me the next day with the recipe which I put under a stone for a moment while I helped Butchie untangle Father's fishing reel which was tied to a kite. We couldn't fix it, so we buried the reel in the garden and when I got back I stood and watched the wind flip the paper under the stone. Then I saw Barbara's bicycle lying in her driveway and I lifted the stone and let the recipe blow away. I told Mother the doctor's wife said she didn't have time to bake bread.

When Father came home for supper, Mother was banging pots on the stove and said that she wouldn't bother with bridge after all, she had too much to do. Father said there was no rest for the wicked and Mother laughed, and her laughter was like rubbing two stones together.

Brenda Riches / FOUR PROSE PIECES

STONE

It's a piece of sedimentary rock, she says.

What's that? I ask, hoping I sound interested.

All rock is volcanic in origin, molten from the earth's interior.
Sedimentary rock is pulverised particles eroded from volcanic rock.

I am touching stone that came from the flaring of the earth.

I pour her tea. Please go on.

Volcanic rock cracks and water gets in. The water freezes, causing a piece to break away. As it gradually moves downhill it gets smaller and smaller. It ends up in the sea or a river. Vagaries of water fashion the stone. See these white craters? She touches them lightly. They are caused by the calcareous bits of small animals.

Calcareous?

The lime remains of the skeleton. They dissolve, leaving a gap in the stone.

Like the ice I put into candle molds, I tell her. The wax sets around it and then it melts and the water leaks away leaving holes that the light can shine through.

Exactly like that, she agrees.

Rock. Molten soft from the raging earth, spilling white from the mountain's crack. Sliding. Cooling. Setting.

And me with my mountains home-made.

Take one empty milk carton. Hang string from a rod across its neck. Pack it with ice. Pour on liquid wax, crayon coloured. Take another carton. Repeat. Another. Line up a spectrum in the fridge. When set, cut away the cardboard. Release the flood. Vagaries of wax. Rainbows to burn.

What about this tiny stone that's stuck in the larger hole, the hole that goes all the way through?

That stone was rammed in by the force of the waves. You couldn't get rid of it if you tried.

Stone trapped inside stone.

Cake crumbs catch at the corners of her mouth. She dabs them off with the fine linen napkin I keep for these occasions. She has reached a silence that seems to be waiting. And I want her to go on.

Where did you find it?

I used to go fossicking on the beach.

Fossicking?

Yes. Scrounging around. Turning things over. I once found a beautiful green stone at Tiree.

Where's that?

In the Hebrides. The beach faces the Atlantic.

Atlantis.

I kept the stone in my coat pocket. It was my fiddling stone. After a year it wasn't there any more. Then we were holidaying in France and Angus found this one and ran up to me, saying, 'Mum, here's a new fiddling stone for you.' That beach faces the Atlantic too.

Vanished rock

I've had this stone a year. You have it now. Keep it as long as you want.

She needs to let it go. She's had it for a year.

Won't you miss it?

Let me have it back some time.

No lingering in her eyes when she speaks. Takes her time over a second cup. Stands and chats in the hall before she pulls on her gloves and leaves.

A thin person crossing the street.

* * *

The best place for the stone was on the open shelf in the kitchen. I had to stand on a stool to put it up there. Next to the shell. As soon as I had placed it I saw they were both discoloured. Fellows in dishevelment. And the shelf was sticky with kitchen dust. Having once noticed it I had to clean it off (though I'd been aware of its possible existence for some days.) I wiped it with a soapy cloth. The bubbled streaks needed two rinsings. Then I was sorry. The shell and the stone sat abject on that shiny veneer.

I put the tea things in the sink and turned the hot tap full on. Her cup was just under the jet, and the water hit hard on the bottom of it and rebounded in a powerful spray, soaking the glass of the window before I could think to turn off the tap. I watched trees through smears of water, water that coursed erratic down to the wooden frame.

* * *

Shell. Thrown up by the sea. Left high for the water's thrashing. Souging back into sleep.

Thom found me that shell. Thom who put things into my hands. Like burdens and gifts. He knew when it was time to leave the beach. Twilight changes the appearance of water, he said. Says I'm a hoarder.

I collect things. My shelves sag. Shells, stones, cracked china, origins and deaths. They might come in handy. They're not in the way, are they, high up on my shelves where dust gathers.

I burn my candles. Wait till wax pools onto the table. While it's still soft I print my fingers onto it. The lines of my skin are whorls of water. I burn more. I leave it till it sets hard so I can pluck it off and press it for the cooling of my hands. My fiddling wax.

* * *

She came to tea again the following week. Talked long about the arrangements she'd made in the event of her death. Sat with hands folded neatly over her dark skirt, moving only to lift her cup. She put on one of her smiles, then removed it. Her face smoothed out over her organised death.

Atlantis. Sinking under calm water. Gone.

What should I do with your stone if you die before I return it?

'Throw it back, she said. Pulled on her smile, and held her cup steady.

ARARAT

Moonset, and Janis leaves her house behind. Night thins in the faraway low sky she faces. Darkness catches at her, here in her garden. She walks, feet black-trailing the lawn's damp. Flowers enter her breathing deep to fill her lungs with lilac, with dogwood.

Like thunderclouds, bushes rounded, rolling into each other. Leaves vapory cover closed buds ready to break. Janis tugs off one twig. Two buds on this stem. Picked to stem their opening.

"Isn't it enough that stars unfurl constantly all over all of the sky too far away no stalks to root them? Some whiteness must remain husked."

The sky she faces spreads paler.

A pool. This side, not where the bushes grow. Stones rough as salt. Warm black earthsmell. Tiny flowers between needles of leaf. A rank dimness of weed. There Janis pauses. Considers the dreams of fish.

"Do they shine down there where stems flesh the still water? Are their bodies rainbows, promises of war? Is their night a wide-eyed staring at events without shadow? Do their mouths move in sleep?"

An absence of birds weights the garden. No leaves stir on the trees that hold her territory from the changing sky. Firs to keep the light, to lay shadow over her weeping birch. She parts its branches, dropping frayed ropes. Walks through. Holds the tree. Sapsmell, sticky. Her face to its trunk, its thin slotted lines on her cheeks.

Behind the firs light grows to shade them more darkly.

Her path is cracked stone. But she wears soft shoes and makes no more sound than the going moon.

She stops again at the open gate. Fills her hands with its cold metal, curving her palms over intricate scrolls, twisting small fingers in rings that don't quite close.

The upper rim of sun is a wire glinting.

"Soon it will be a barbed noose to loop the day's fire."

She leaves the gate behind.

Flowers now come back to the day. A gravel walk, banked by daisies, tall and serried, saffron circles, petals radiant white. And dandelions opening wide to catch tatters of sunlight. She moves between them, past clamorous birds whose throats tremble clear as dew. Through the wild rose hedge. Thorny. Petalsmell. She sits till the sun is complete.

"Sunlight nets the body of the river. If I cross, will I tangle in silver strings?"

Feet in the shallows raise sand. Knees nudge water, flurrying. Thighs push to ripple a way open.

Smooth and still day lies over the land. Should she rest now?

"So close the highway's tall poles bar the sky. Touch the warm and humming wood."

She leaves her wet shoes by the river.

The poles' shadows have retreated. She walks on burning asphalt, the sun following. At length she turns.

In a distant shimmer of land her dark house floating.

UNTITLED

Petal by petal the apple tree is losing blossoms. The wind has broken them apart. White by white the tree loses.

One petal is caught on a spider's web. It turns slowly around its own weight.

I took you up to this tree and made you watch it. I made you stay there till the last petal had left its branch. I took your hands and pressed them to the bark of the tree.

What does it feel like?

Old thoughts, you said, ready to peel away. The lining of your skull.

I told you it was my skin you were touching. You wanted to pull your hands away but I kept them there.

Till your hands gnarled.

MUSICIAN

Musician, when your hands moved over strings did you
see disease waste your fingers?

While you played, did you watch on the wall the shadow of your
cancerous dead mother? Of your uncle's head swelling malignant?

*Fingering he lets song from string from ivory touches to stroke chords
alive. He is instrument to this body's tune, the heart of it.*

Musician, hear the yellow clover that springs alongside hard highways
lilt yellow your making. Not black plumes on the bridles of slow
horses. Sunlight your sound gold soaked in young wheat thick with
bladeleaf.

Deanna Levis / A MATTER OF CHOICE

PROLOGUE

I drive slowly down 18th avenue, past the house where the Hurlstons lived and next door, the Jang family. I see myself at 7 in the Jangs' yard, telling Bonnie to say her name because she couldn't pronounce it properly. Boni Ta Julie Jang she'd say, with the accent on the Ta. She'd look puzzled when I laughed.

Across the street, the Sankeys. They were the last to leave, after Derek got married 5 years ago. I'd always thought they would never move away.

And two doors down, our house, grey and aged, the stucco falling away in places, the stairs uneven. Dad had always kept the trim and the stairs painted, the garden tidy with flowers along the walk. Now except for the curtains on the windows, it looks abandoned. For a second I want to ring the bell and announce that I used to live here, why aren't you keeping the place up, then realize I can't, I have no rights here anymore.

I drive to the end of the block and turn up the lane, past the big house on the corner with the garden that was so enormous when I sneaked into it 25 years ago. From the car I can see the little bridge over the lily pond, but the gnomes and elves are gone. I was a princess there and the gnomes watched over me from their rocky perches. I remembered the last time I was in that garden. I was standing on the bridge and a low voice yelled out, "Hey you, little girl! What are you doing in my garden?" I bolted through the hole in the hedge, terrified, and ran all the way up the lane to our house. Grownups didn't understand princesses, they'd just think I was crazy. I decided that when I grew up I'd understand princesses and gnomes and little girls in beautiful gardens.

I stop the car at our backyard. There's the cherry tree, the smooth branch where I used to hang by my knees, the small lawn where I practised the high jump and did hand stands and head stands over and over again. The old garage is gone, there's a carport there now, in the place where Pete asked me to go steady one Sunday after church. I thought of the manly smell of him close to me that day, how small I felt in his arms. When we kissed, our tongues touched and I suddenly got weak in the knees. It was the 5th time he'd asked me to go steady and the 1st time I didn't say no.


I looked up at the house. The basement door is the same and the stairs up to the kitchen, the nook windows. There's a face in the nook window. It's a man and he's staring at my car. I flip the gear into drive.

At the end of the lane I look back and it's the day I walked home from school unexpectedly for lunch. There was an S.P.C.A. truck pulling away from our house with my dog inside. Tumbles saw me and cried and scratched at the wire mesh door trying to get out and I ran as fast as I could after the truck but couldn't catch it. I raced back to the house and screamed, "Mother, they took Tumbles away! Where is he going?" And sadly she told me he was very sick, he had cancer and was going to have to be put to sleep. She'd hoped I wouldn't have to see him go. Then we were both crying and I couldn't go back to school. Nothing mattered anymore without Tumbles, nothing.

I sit in the waiting room of the head and neck clinic — the only person under 50. A white-haired woman meticulously washes her hands at the sink. Five minutes later, she does it again. Across from me, a man with no nose studies his fingernails. One by one, the patients are ushered into the examining room. I catch glimpses of several doctors and a bright light in the middle of the room. When I walk in, 7 faces raise their eyebrows — I'm an oddity. They seat me on a white stool under the bright light. "Good morning." "How old are you?" "May I look in your throat please?" 3 surgeons, 2 internists, a radiologist and a pathologist take turns examining my neck. Out of courtesy, they introduce themselves before touching me.

She was always there, reminding, harping, ironing the lovely clothes she dressed me in. The coats were english wool with velvet collars and hats to match. She passed them on to my cousins because they wouldn't wear out. When I got older it was navy burberrys like the kids in private school had to wear. I was 12 when she bought the last one. We had this awful fight in the store and she swore she'd never go shopping with me again. I hoped she meant it, but of course she didn't.

When I was really small, the dresses were viyella with smocking on the chests. The Bay took a picture when I was 2, in a yellow one. Mother says they blew the print up to 6 feet and displayed it in one of their windows.

For Christmas that year, Dad built me a car. It was black and white with pedals, and it had headlights that worked. It even had whitewalls and my initials painted on the door like this . I have the picture still, but nobody knows what happened to the car. Mother wasn't a keeper. The only things she still has are the pictures, and my first shoes which she had bronzed.

At 5:30 in the morning, a nurse comes in to put the tube down my nose, and I remember when they tried it with the woman in the next bed. She gagged, cried and then screamed, and it took 2 nurses and an intern twenty minutes to force it down to her stomach. I talk to myself. It can't be that bad, don't be silly, there's nothing to be afraid of. "This will be easy if you just relax and swallow when I tell you to," she says. Every muscle is tensed. I take a deep breath, try to relax. "Okay," I say. She sits on the bed and puts the tube into my left nostril. "The only hard part is getting over the cartilage; it may hurt a bit." She pushes up and I wince when the pain starts. She waits, then forces it over. "Now swallow," she says, and I feel the tube going into my throat. She pauses. "Swallow." Down into my chest. "Good, once more." The urge to gag is overwhelming. I swallow hard and feel the tube sliding into my stomach. "That's all, you were very cooperative. Sometimes it takes a long time to get these down," she says, and leaves quickly enough to miss the sheets trembling and the tears which never fall in company because I'm more afraid of her seeing my fear than the fear itself.

Taken almost everywhere with my parents, I learned to adapt to new situations. Mother believed that no-one should be “backward about coming forward,” and I wasn’t.

They took me along to a big party one night, when I was 3. I walked boldly into the roomful of strange adults and introduced myself. I was greeted with smiles and questions. After a while, my parents led me off to bed. It was too soon for me, but making a fuss was foolish. At first I was frightened in the strange bed, but I could hear the people laughing downstairs and soon fell asleep listening to the sounds. I remember Dad picking me up to carry me out to the car and Mother’s arms around me on the way home.

Voices, very far away, calling a name — my name. “Deanna wake up, wake up, it’s all over. Can you take a deep breath?” Sleepy, too sleepy — breath, take a breath? In, out. “Good girl!” The voice is louder. “Open your eyes, Deanna.” So tired, only want to sleep, the voice won’t let me. Cold. Where am I? Must think, think. A shiver jolts me. Hospital, operation — oh I’m alive. I open my eyes and the face above me blurs.

They lift me and a maze of tubes into a bed. Crying children, agonizing sound. So thirsty. I open my mouth to speak but no words come out. I motion with my hands and a nurse puts something lemony to my mouth.

I wake again to someone pressing on my neck. “Oozing Doctor.” My throat hurts. I look up and Dr. McDougall is there. “You’re all right, dear,” he says. “We’re just going to take you back to surgery for a few minutes.” The nurse lifts a bandage dripping with blood from my neck. I stare at the doctor. “It’s okay, you’re just oozing a little bit. We’re going to fix that now. Go back to sleep dear.” He lifts the sheet and puts a needle in my hip.

All night I hear the children crying, try to make the nurse help them. Can’t stand the crying.

At 4, I made my debut on the stage at the Georgia Auditorium. It was Vi Cameron's Revue and the number was "Little Old Lady," a song and dance routine. The dresses were long frilly things with matching hats and parasols; all yellow except mine, which was green. I was the star. We took 2 curtain calls, but nobody realized the extent of the hit we'd made until after the show. A Hollywood talent scout had been there, and he phoned my mother to ask if she would take me to California for a screen test. In later years I often wondered what would have happened if she and dad had agreed. "Successor To Shirley Temple Found At Last!" or "Child Star Wins Rave Reviews!" In any case, I got the measles. When I recovered, I returned happily to the barre.

My father is waiting at the doors of the elevator. Through a haze of demerol, I see the shock register in his eyes. The nurse and orderly wheel my bed down the hall to my room. All the way down the hall, Dad holds my hand. "Are you in pain, how do you feel, do you want anything?" I smile and shake my head. In the room he turns away to blow his nose. He's crying. I must look terrible. I can't speak; there's a tracheotomy tube in my throat. I try to reassure him with my eyes.

When I was 5, they sent me to a private kindergarten. I remember being picked up by a chauffeur. On the first day, I cried and refused to go because his dark uniform frightened me. Mother thought I was just being 'difficult' and pushed me into the car. When I arrived at the school, the teacher called to ask if she would please pick me up. I was hysterical, and had been sick in the car. She rushed right over to get me.

My cousin Brian lived with us then. He was like a brother, for a year or so anyway. I wanted a brother or sister more than anything else in the world. I used to ask mom and dad all the time when they were going to get one. Get one.

Dark — must be night. I guess I should be sleeping but I'm not tired any more. There's a light on in my room. It's larger than the rooms I've been in before. There's another bed but no-one is in it. One corner window, faded drapes, a sink, a few hard-backed chairs and oh — flowers. Pink carnations. They must be from Jim.

Suddenly I'm hungry and push the bell for a nurse. There's an I.V. in my arm. This must be what it's like to be embalmed — I can feel the glucose flowing through my veins. Footsteps in the hall. Maybe the nurse will get me some paper and a pencil. I wish I could talk; I have so many questions.

A lot of people said I was spoiled. I thought anyone who had brothers and sisters was more spoiled than me. I had nobody to side with me when my parents were mad, or even to share the happy times.

When we had guests in the house, I was asked to perform for them. "Deanna, sing for us dear, dance for us. Play the piano for your aunt; she loves to hear you play." Even then, I knew that was bullshit. They wanted to hear what great parents they were. Such a wonderful daughter. So much talent. Pretty too. All those years performing, learning to charm adults.

All day the ward is a maze of sounds. Nurses, doctors, visitors, auxiliary carts, food trays, tubes of blood clicking in their wire baskets. At night it's quiet enough to think. I can talk now, by putting my fingers over the tracheotomy tube. The voice is tinny and strange, but I don't care; at least I can speak. It was awful having to write everything on a slateboard. It must be horrible to be permanently dumb.

Dad is a superb, almost completely self-taught pianist. He had one year of lessons as a child, just enough to read the top line of a sheet of music. The beautiful chords and phrasing which were filled in later, he couldn't explain; he just played them. He did buy some music, but a lot of pieces he learned from me. I would sing the melody until he picked it up. It only took a few minutes. Sometimes we played duets. He'd teach me the bass, then add the melody. We did "Tea for Two" in 3 different beats with 2 key changes. Hours could go by when we were working on a piece, hours of closeness which Mother couldn't share.

It's been 4 days now since the start of this test. One more day before they give back the thyroxin pills that will sustain me for the rest of my life. I'm so tired. Each day I feel more drained. Today I keep lapsing into tears, and I know I can't control it which is worse.

Before lunch I feel nauseous. A nurse gives me a shot of gravol but the tray arrives too soon for the drug to work and the smell of the food is unbearable. When they take the tray away, I cry myself to sleep.

I wake to voices near the bed. My parents are here to say goodbye on their way to the Okanagan. We'd discussed it a week ago, before the operation. They wanted to be sure I'd be okay and not mind their leaving. Now Dad looks uncertain. "Are you sure you don't want us to stay?" he asks. No I'm not sure at all. "Yes, yes, it's just that I don't feel very well today." He looks at Mother. "I don't think I should go, but you go. You need the rest." She sighs. "But the doctor said she'd be all right." "I know, I know," he says, frowning and holding my hand. "You look as if you don't want us to go." He turns to me and then Mother, torn. Jim arrives and they look at him with raised eyebrows. Tell us what to do Jim, we want to do the right thing. Dad sits on the edge of the bed. "I'm not going. She needs one of us and I couldn't enjoy the trip." There's a familiar defiance in Mother's eyes. As usual, she's fighting both of us and not understanding why. Odd man out. I can't stand it anymore. "I don't care what you do. Go, stay. For God's sake, I'm sick, I feel awful. I can't make your decisions for you!" Now she's hurt. "Don't you think you're being a little selfish dear? After all, I'm tired too, what with looking after the boys all day

and coming to see you here. My blood pressure's way up with worry." "I know that Mother, but I just can't cope with this discussion right now." Tears. Bigger them. Let them fall. "You're feeling depressed," she says. No, no I'm not depressed. I'm lying here with half a neck zippered in black silk, the prospect of more of the same on the other side and an energy level of zero. What am I supposed to be? They go out into the hall to discuss it by themselves. When they come back, Dad says they're going to go. "For your mother's sake." I sink into the pillows.

After 8 years of dancing lessons, I “retired.” I was 12, tall, slim and agile. On sports day I battled with Patsy Tiefenbaker for the most blue ribbons. *She* was 12, tall, slim and agile, and also the winner. In the spirit of good sportsmanship, I congratulated her through gritted teeth and hated her guts.

At school I got straight A’s in music, one of my few scholastic triumphs. In grade 7 I sang “I Could Have Danced All Night” at the noon-hour talent show. My english teacher, Mr. Brockington, accompanied me brilliantly on the piano. In Mother’s pink satin wedding gown (pinned down the back) and brown velvet shoes, I sang with everything I had and received a wild ovation.

We had english right after lunch that day. I floated in late (the performer’s privilege) and to my delight, the class applauded. Mr. Brockington beamed, sat down at his desk, and gave an inspired reading of “Old Yeller.” Before he had finished most of the class was in tears, and when the bell rang, nobody moved.

The next morning an orderly takes me down to radiology in a wheelchair and leaves me in a hallway. I wait and wait and after a while the nausea comes back and I want to lie down. People in green uniforms rush by, ignoring me. I think I'm going to faint, I can feel the blood draining from my face. I bend over in the chair. "Are you Mrs. Levis?" somebody says. I look up. "Yes." "Good, we're ready for you now." She wheels me into a room with a machine that will pick up any trace of thyroid tissue. The radiologist warns me to lie perfectly still and not to swallow. For fifteen minutes. "If you have to swallow, do it when the machine is over the side of your head — not in the middle, okay?" I shiver on the cold table. "I'll try." Back and forth it clicks interminably 8 inches over my head. My arms and legs are strapped to the table. After 10 minutes I want to scream. Suddenly I've got to swallow. The machine is right over my nose and he said I mustn't. Click, click, I'm going to choke, must wait — now.

As a young boy, Dad would sit for hours at the edge of a swamp to watch the birds and insects. If you sat very still he said, you could see an infinite variety of aquatic life — water skaters and little black beetles which rely on the surface tension of water for their mobility. Or spiders which live under water and bring air between their legs to their habitat below. He talked about the steel-like sound of rain on the surface of a pond when no other sound invades to lessen it. He tried to teach me to be observant, but I was always in too much of a hurry.

It seemed that there was never a moment when somebody wasn't telling me what to do. If it wasn't one of my parents, it was a school teacher, piano teacher or dancing teacher. I became resentful and more than a little rebellious with authority figures. Nobody ever wanted to learn anything from *me*. My friends who had brothers and sisters didn't seem nearly so pressured to be perfect. I envied them constantly and longed for a sibling so that Mom and Dad would ease up on me.

Once Dad sat me down and dictated a letter to me, while I wrote. "To whom it may concern:" (My future husband, perhaps?) "If when I grow up, I am not all that I should be, I promise I won't say it was my parents' fault, because when they tried to teach me what was right, I wouldn't listen. . . ." There was more, but I've forgotten the rest. I was to keep the letter for future reference he said, and decide whether at 13 I could make all my own decisions from then on. After a week or so, I apologised and burned the letter in the fireplace.

In my battles with Mother though, Dad was usually on my side. "Why don't you leave her alone?" he'd say. "You're always at her for something." She would get furious because she often had legitimate

complaints, and then they'd start fighting and there I was in the middle. I became quite adept at patching up their arguments and getting off scot-free myself. Her pet peeve was my room. She'd say, "Your room looks like a cyclonestruckit!" For years I had no idea what the word cyclonestruckit meant. I only knew it had something to do with my room being dirty. "Cleanliness is next to Godliness," she quoted, but I couldn't understand that either. I figured that God would like me just as much dirty as clean. After all, it wasn't really sinful like stealing or lying or telling when you swore you wouldn't tell. And anyway, even a girl couldn't play kick the can without getting a little bit dirty.

At 6:30 am a nurse comes in to give me a shot of demerol and in a few minutes I fall back to sleep. I wake to the sound of a stretcher being positioned by my bed. For a second I visualize myself leaping out, running to the elevator, and escaping from the Outpatient's exit in my backless O.R. gown. Too late. A nurse and an orderly help me onto the stretcher and strap me down. We wheel down the hall.

I keep thinking about last night when that resident said I'd have to have another tracheotomy along with the neck dissection. He acted patronizing when I demanded to see Dr. MacDougall about it. "But Dr. MacDougall didn't say anything to me about another tracheotomy," I said. For some reason I noticed that my arms were crossed. "It's on your chart though," he said. "I don't care — I want to see him!" "He isn't here now, but you can see him tomorrow." "Tomorrow will be too late. The operation is scheduled for 8:00 in the morning." "Well you'll see him then. Don't worry about it." He left me there crying, and a few minutes later, a nurse comes in with a pill. "What's that?" I wailed. "Oh, just a mild sedative." "I don't want it!" "Why don't you take it dear. You'll feel better." She handed me the tiny paper cup and a glass of water and I knew she was just going to stand there until I took the goddamned thing anyway, so what was the use?

More than any friend, the piano fulfilled my needs for emotional release. When I was angry, it tolerated my attacks of dissonance, and in happy moments we melded together in harmony and well-being. Time became irrelevant. Mother could never understand it. "Deanna, your dinner is on the table!" To me, dinner was so trivial. I couldn't get it through to her that inspiration doesn't adhere to a clock.

I spent a lot of time at the piano, but Mrs. Wallace was often angry because I wouldn't do enough practising. It was more fun to compose my own music. I never wrote my compositions on manuscripts; it was easier to just remember them. One piece was pretty good. I played it at a recital and they fussed over me as if I were another Chopin. Mother clucked away. "She wrote it all herself. Oh yes, she *is* talented." She was so proud, I should have been happy, but somehow it just made me sick. When we got home, I put on my jeans and escaped to the garden.

They wheel me off the elevator and into a hallway. After a while someone pushes me through swinging doors to the anesthetist's room. Green uniforms, masked faces. "Could we have your left arm please?" Straps off, needles. I scream, "Please don't put me out until Dr. MacDougall gets here!" Eyebrows raise, questioning. "All right," a face answers.

He arrives; I know his eyes. At least they won't cut off my leg by mistake. I tell him what the resident said about the tracheotomy. "Oh, I'm almost certain it won't be necessary unless you have trouble breathing. I don't think you will." Mild relief. They push me into the O.R.

I began to realize that my parents had been right about the important things. I'd always felt loved. And they'd instilled in me the power of a "yes I can" philosophy. There was nothing I couldn't do. It was simply a matter of choice.

Dad would put his arms around me and say, "You're the best thing that ever happened to me." We used to laugh about it, because he hadn't wanted any children. Mother said that when she became pregnant, he told her she'd better not expect *him* to look after the baby; he didn't want any part of it. She said that lasted until I was born. He looked at me and fell in love for good. I was in no danger of growing up without a strong self-image. No doubt about it.

The flowers are everywhere. One of the interns counted 21 bouquets. "What have you got that I haven't?" he asked, grinning. "Fantastic legs," I said.

Yesterday a card arrived from Toronto. It was from Pete. I couldn't believe it. I haven't seen him for 10 years. He was in Vancouver on holiday and somebody told him I was in the hospital. "I heard you weren't well Deanna," it said, "and I wanted to say hello and send you my best wishes for a speedy recovery. Sincerely, Pete."

Dad said, "If you want lots of friends, be one." It was a simple credo and I saw no reason to disagree with it. The neighbourhood kids and school friends were welcomed into the house. There were always enough cookies and Mother was generous with them. On sunny days we played outside, and if it rained there were lots of toys in my bedroom.

Sometimes we built forts in the sawdust bin in the basement. We'd shovel out pathways and hold secret meetings, hidden behind the fragrant chips of wood.

Years later, when the old furnace was replaced with an oil burning model, I stood in the empty sawdust bin and relived those childish moments, the smell of the wood still strong in my nostrils.

Joan Haggerty /

UNCOUPLING TAKES OFF FLESH

"Fine, take the car and go. Now, wait a minute, wait a minute, what'll you do with Jordan?"

I change the phone to my other ear. "Jordan'll be fine. I'll start at the beginning of his nap. He'll sleep maybe four, five hours. That's how long it takes, right?"

"You don't know the way."

"I'll get a map."

"It'll be cold."

"It's only the end of September."

"It's the beginning of October. Be accurate for once, Val."

"Are you angry?"

"Val, if I were angry at you, the *paint* would be blistering on the walls. Is it?"

All is quiet. Last night had to be the night the wedding guests left not the, no it was the first time I ever, how could I have been up there trying to help when I wasn't, this is how many weeks later? A month? What've I been *doing*?"

"Val?"

"What?"

"I called back to tell you. When you get to the land, don't move Mother."

"Mother?"

"Mother with the wooden tits. Don't move her. And Val?"

"Whaaaaat?"

"Drive carefully."

Drive carefully, my ass. Two for tea. Baby makes three. I slip a card out of my tarot pack and put it in my pocket without looking at it.

Couple of hours later, the lady in question is seen pulling up outside a Madison Avenue Bookstore in her trusty green Oldsmobile. She stuffs a dummy in her baby's mouth, slings her purse on her shoulder and slopes in. "Dear Tom, I have a tarot card in my hand. It's pressed face down on the shelf below me. I'm writing on the next shelf down (with my right hand) and the tarot card is pressed (under my left palm) on the next. My right hand beckons you; my left holds you back.

I don't know where the flow is taking me now but I'm going with it, I suppose. I'm learning to allow myself to push the river. I'm willing to say our meeting had to do with the stars but I call the flow simplistic jargon when I don't like where it goes. Leave that to the poet who tells you not to look sad when you say goodbye. Make it easy for him. Me? I'd rather hang on. To branches, daddy's hand, your shoe as I slip downstream.

Did you hear the one about the man who was shipwrecked and spent the first eight hours wishing to be rescued before he decided he was going about things all wrong, that what he should have been thinking about was survival?

Yeah, well it's time to look at this here tarot card. You know what I'm wearing under this duffle coat, don't you? A chiffon dress, very pale, patterned in feathers. Nice see-through fabric.

It's the six of swords. There's a woman hunched over in a shawl with a child beside her. Six swords are piercing the bottom of the boat. Her head is down. The water is smooth on her left side, stormy on her right. She's being poled across by a tall dark man. I can't see his face but I know it's you. There's a shore in the distance.

I met you, my love, when I was afraid to enter the river, did I ever tell you that? I was standing on the edge. You came along looking like my rescuer.

I will never, ever forget what it was like when we met, Tom. No matter where I go, what I do. Do you believe me? I was the wanderer, come back. I really did believe that God would one day pull me up to him with a finger under each of my wings and then, then it would happen. And it did.

Well, how do we live with banishment, eh? Shrugs of experience, I suppose. You say it would be better if we'd never met.

I remember now what I've come here for. I was going to look up the interpretation of the card I'm carrying. The reference book says:

Journey by water. Passage away from difficulty and sorrow. Harmony will again prevail. The journey may be done in consciousness that will raise the seeker out of his (read *her*) difficulties to a more understanding frame of mind.

I see. The matter (as I see it). She is allowing herself to be taken across water. The resolution: she must do it herself. Now I would only fasten onto this message if it coincided with the one coming from inside me and it does. Yup, yup, it fits. At least that's in sync.

So what was I doing while I packed my overalls and smeared lotion on the baby's ass? I was fighting the old cliché, what am I going to do with the rest of my life? And here I thought I was relatively cliché-free this morning. Yours, etc.

I get back in the car. Jordan's spat out his dummy and is cooing. I'd be better off to stay home, get some video equipment and we could televise ourselves. *"Do I always snarl when I peel carrots? Oh, mother, do you have to wear that dress? I don't want to eat this hippy rabbit stew. I want porkchops and tinned peas like all the other kids."* Where was I? Oh yeah, trying to change lanes. I forgot to look in the mirror. Man over there leaning on his horn like a bladder. Glance, I'm being chased, another glance, he's gaining, another, he's past and another pair of yellow lidless eyes burn me. Big breath. GO. Did it, by god.

Flash on that little brown book that told me stopping distances. How far behind that fender am I supposed to be? If only I'd practiced highway driving instead of letting him do it.

Tom's been travelling up and down this highway like a corridor, no problem. Says the route gets shorter each time. If he can do it, so can I. I haven't been up here for two weeks. I stayed home to spite him. He came back with Jordan under his arm like a fish. I was sitting at the oak table drawing a bird with tears flowing out of its belly like eggs. I'd hung dolls from the doorknobs by their legs. He didn't notice. He leaned over my shoulder: "What'ya doing, kiddo? Signing my yearbook?" I thought of him driving down the highway with our son in his mouth like a rabbit. "Take dictation, o.k? We need a list of things to get for Delta. One, new jumpsuits for the horses."

I hold out my arms to him from my chair at the dining room table. "Don't you want to hold me?" "No, I do not, Val. I don't know what you're doing to this place but it's like a morgue. It's got that left-over marriage smell, like a dirty ashtray. There's no place for me here." He runs. I go over to my cupboard, climb in, and close the door.

Instead of having a tantrum when I can't get what I want, I stay silent and look into my brain, my witch's cauldron. I stir the pot until it whips up a gothic storm like stiff black eggwhites. And *I* materialize out of this storm in a black cloak on a heath. I keep the cloud close around me as well, pull a piece of hair under my nose like a moustache, and smell it hard in and hard out. Black steam comes out my nostrils.

I am *not* driving away to make him love me more. Liar. If you're thirsty, you picture a glass of water until you get it and the image goes away. Jung says if a couple separates because of the woman's compulsion to be in the right, then the man in her brain will get very big. The him-in-me. My polarity game. Romantic, anti-romantic. Back and forth. A little boat. "What'ja mean, it won't go ahead or back, lady? You've got it in neutral." Scowling face. The air is like cryptonite, that stuff Superman carries in his pocket.

Tom charges out with Jorday under his arm like a football. Then he charges back in. Jorday's laughing. He forgot he had to bring him back because he hadn't been nursed for a day and a night. I take him wearily, like an old wet nurse. I had been expressing my milk into the kitchen sink. It felt good to have his mouth back. He left like a gentleman the second time.

I can't get inside him and it's arrogant to try. "Tom came out of his office and hailed a cab." O.K. That much. In our early days, his writers sat with their legs crossed chewing their fingernails waiting for news as to whether they were going to get applause or tomatoes to eat that winter, and Tom was supposed to be reading their manuscripts and I kept trying to keep him in bed all morning.

"You hang onto me like a surfboard."

I hang on, tighter.

"Who *are* you, woman? What do you want?"

To be honest, I want his heart. And I don't mean as in valentine. I mean as in cannibalism. I'm trapped in it as he walks down 45th Street, goes into *Chock-Full-O-Nuts* for a coffee. He wears me like a badge on a blazer. I'm shaking the bars. My third eye is his left nipple. As he comes out, a blindman taps him on the shoulder: "Excuse me, Sir, but I think your woman wants out."

I slip out from behind the bus when it stops at 79th St. I'm disguised as a punk. I karate him flat on his back, get out my knife, cut deftly around the nipple, lift it neatly as a manhole cover, and lay it aside. He acts like he's been waiting for me, when I get on top of him in bed. Once he wanted me to rape him but when he had to ask it was all spoilt. None of this is gory, of course. (*And now, class? This is a little harder.*) I cannot believe I am this angry. I don't feel pretty. People don't notice us. They go on walking, their newspapers under their arms like babies. Their shins swing from their knees like metronomes. They're kicking the inside of my skull. I have swallowed some giant whole and it *ain't* Tom.

I kneel on his chest. He beseeches me silently as an innocent deer. I'm slaughtering the wrong victim and it's too late. His eyes ache up at me in dumb protest, brown as bark and glowing. They are a window to the forest where he lives. He's surrounded by debris: his briefcase, glasses, dogshit, newspapers. I can't understand why he isn't resisting me. His eyes grow larger and larger. They stream with tears, and birds fly out like kites on strings. They are *women*, for godsake, tiny black sperm-shaped women like Munch ghosts. My knife turns to paper. The fat bloody heart in my hand is a cake with too much icing. It throbs silently.

My mouth bleeds. He is one male-female creature stuck copulating while its hands claw at its own chest and its four eyes go round and round like a broken toy. The sky women are shrill; their cries drown the traffic. They want me to cut their strings loose. I can't do it. I'm trying to stand on the corpse with one foot and hold the reins of these powerful creatures with my hand, terrified to let go. Wonder woman, where are you? Home with an aspirin?

The highway is bordered by junkyards. A gantry crane rears up like a dinosaur. I hurtle my way to the intersection where ten overpasses pile on top of each other like a huge transport truck. The cars don't move. I get under it somehow (no fault of my own). This is not the river I had in mind, fellas.

I'm supposed to be equidistant from the car in front and the car behind. But what'ya do if one behind is butting yr ass? I'll catch this turn or die trying. No time to watch women change into birds. The big screen's rolled up, god's had his violent flick for today. Before breakfast? Getting a bit sleezed up out there, huh, fellas?

At least the steering wheel's hardened. Now it's black as iron. Leah's handprints were always there in the fog if you looked hard enough. I'm not jealous of her, she's kind. I glance to the side, can I pass? I slip back into my blinkers but I've caught sight of the woods. Maybe I could start a deconstruction company. What I do is buy up a shopping centre and then hire people to take it apart and distribute the goods. Scarsdale ladies come up in their stationwagons and stand around till someone hands them a sack of tomatoes. They don't know they'll soon be digging roots from under their garden furniture. First good idea I've had in months. If I can remember the names of all the trees in there, I'll manage the turn. Elm, willow, white ash, oak, northern maple, southern maple, uh . . . uh . . . shit . . . is that the sign . . . get a little closer T A C yup, yup, get it in, what . . . it's it . . . SUMAC. Great. Right on. Did it.

"How 'bout that, Jordan? Yer old lady got us on the right road."
I flash my sisterhood fist.

Jordan wakes up. First mistake, I shouldn't have shouted. He lies beside me on the seat smiling his toothless grin with a bit of snot running down his nose. He has grand brown eyes.

The Taconic is so pretty. Red, ochre, brown, yellow. I'm high suddenly, I grab a piece of Kleenex (I even had the wit to tuck a box of it behind the visor.) I take my eyes off the road to wipe his nose. Sweet baby. He coos at me and I smile daftly back, pursing my mouth out at him. But when I glance back up, I'm over the centre line and there's a car heading straight for me. Honking. I swerve back just in time. This is downright dangerous, being without a man. Point is: I'm used to taking care of the small stuff, like noses. Tom does the big stuff, like keeping the car on the road. So now I gotta do the big stuff and the small stuff. There's no room for error, and yes, I'm a little scared.

Well, well, we're in the clear now. Cruising, babe, watch me cruise. No hands. No, no, I'm driving carefully. Really. I turn Jordan around so his head is on my knee and I can hold his cheek in my hand. Dashing along just dandy for maybe one two miles. Then that shimmy in the car again. Threat, dry mouth. Not to forget. Last night. Cockroaches in the bed. Tom from a phone booth: "Babe, we have to collect our individual strengths, the more my insular part asserts itself, the more you don't want to hear it. Please understand." Don't pay any attention. Keep driving. Jordan's crying. I'm rocking him. Smaller, shrinking like Maryjane. All out of cryptonite. "So you're not coming home?" "No, I'll stay at the *Ramada Inn*."

Late at night. More cockroaches. I phone. "There's no one here by that name" and the other day that writer phoning, tells me he's met me, don't I work for a new magazine?

"Babe, that writer you respect so much? He's losing his marbles; he remembers meeting me at lunch."

I go to the office the morning after he's not at the motel, half-zapped from downers. He's upset. He's sick. Poor bastard. We hold hands. I said about the cockroaches. He said it was the *Americana*. Is there a motel called that? May I use your phone book? Never mind. What's one more fuck in the universe? Or tantrum? Or couple? He holds the cards; the money, the land. If I'm replaced, I lose my turf. Hell, if Cinderella'd had her act together, she wouldn't have given a damn about the ball. How many strikes did you say she had against her?

I said I was going. He said yes. He said where? I said I have no luggage. He hands me a *Master Charge* and tells me to go buy luggage. I don't want luggage. I'll use boxes. I keep the *Master Charge*.

"Got to step back, got to get on my own trip."

I don't want to step back but I will to please him. I'll pace him no matter what.

"I'm scared."

"Yes." We hold hands. I go home to pack.

What is there about waiting for the stores to open so I can get some cardboard boxes that makes me so horny? You'd think masturbating all night both nights would do it. It doesn't. I want him. I want his lips down on me, I want him like the rock in Simon's song, I want to hold onto him, I want him on his knees with his arms around my waist, I want to eat him until my saliva and the tip of his cock are one, I want to put it in my ear my eyes my navel twitch it on my clitoris between my toes, I want him to come like a fountain until I'm coated from head to foot in sperm. If only I could get my thighs around his head his mouth and my cunt would be one, I want him to suck me into his head like a genie going back into a bottle, I want to go back to the office, rip out the telephone, and sit on his face. I want him to bite me, drown in his own tears and beg for my forgiveness, I want to weep like a maid down on my knees, I want the see-saw, I want to get off the see-saw, I want it, I've got to get off, I want it, I've got to get off.

What's wrong with me I can't think about anything else but sex? Or is it because I'm like an animal in a cage here with the air too hot to go out in, nobody in the shops and the phone not ringing? I've read about how when animals are taken away from their wilderness and put into zoos they do nothing but copulate until exhaustion. What are they trying to recover? They can't free their energy so it turns back on itself. I see two baboons in a cage. The female wants to do nothing but fuck all day. She salivates, her hands shake and wring each other when she can't get it, the male's rhythms are different, he doesn't want to fuck all day. He starts shaking the bars, she is shaking him for more fucking, she wants him to suck her more, he doesn't want to, when he doesn't want to it makes him feel like a machine sucking sucking when he's long past had any interest in it. He shakes the bars. She weeps. She gets a stick and scratches the ground and bites her lips. She beats her head against the bars and begs God to come and fuck her. God says he's busy.

I think of you in the Delta Woods, waiting for me to pass the baby. Your palms are upturned, testing for rain. You look down at me, dark and foxy. I hand you the baby. You sing *dem bones dem bones, dem wet bones*. It's raining. What'll it be like in the tent tonight? Will we always feel chased off until there's a shelter?

I throw my hopscotch into the next square. It'll all be okay when I reach Delta. I'm waiting for me somewhere and my poor present self has no power at all.

My cardboard boxes are open in the living room, flowers with my sweaters and toys for centres. I'll go buy some topsoil, bury them in dirt and sow grass; then I won't have to leave. Leaving the world of men and going *to what*?

The unknown. "Maybe I'm just an awkward fit, like a difficult shoe size," I said at the office. "Oh, Val, don't give yourself *airs*." Hoping they'll bloom and surprise me, I desert the boxes and find the bedroom. Goddam our paisley bedspread that looks like my security blanket. I pick it up and suck the corner. My hair comes floating down the hall. I want to shred the blanket through my teeth like dental floss. I wish I had the mask to help me do this thing.

I screw the cap off the nozzle on the waterbed and press a bowl under it into the plastic. The nozzle bends like a tap and warm water pours out. It's thick and slimy. The bowl fills and the nozzle erects again as I carry it to the kitchen sink. I pour like my period after a swollen week. This is mean; it's his bed too. I'll only take half of the water.

If I stay awhile in the tent, maybe I can get my periods to fit the moon again. Last night it was so full it had a bump on its side. I bend over for a second bowlful.

I walk back and forth to the sink for two hours. The water in a waterbed weighs over a ton. It took an hour of pouring before the bed went down two inches. If it didn't feel so good, I would rationalize that it's not necessary; he must know my spirit inhabits this bed. Finally it's gimpy enough, like a sheet twisted after fucking. I pull up my avocado plants by the roots and lay them to rest on it.

Now I can wade across. I won't need Charon. *Still trying to show Daddy you can do it yourself, are you Val? How old did you say you were?*

Tom phones about mother. I tell him I'm going to Delta and the tent will do. I choose two cardboard boxes from the six I've packed and fold in their petals. I want to pare my life down to the bone. I take my tarot card by her skinny black arm, put Jordan in the pack-a-baby, place *Hollows* (the book every goodwoman keeps by her bed) in my shopping bag, erase I COME from my slogan on the door, and call it a day.



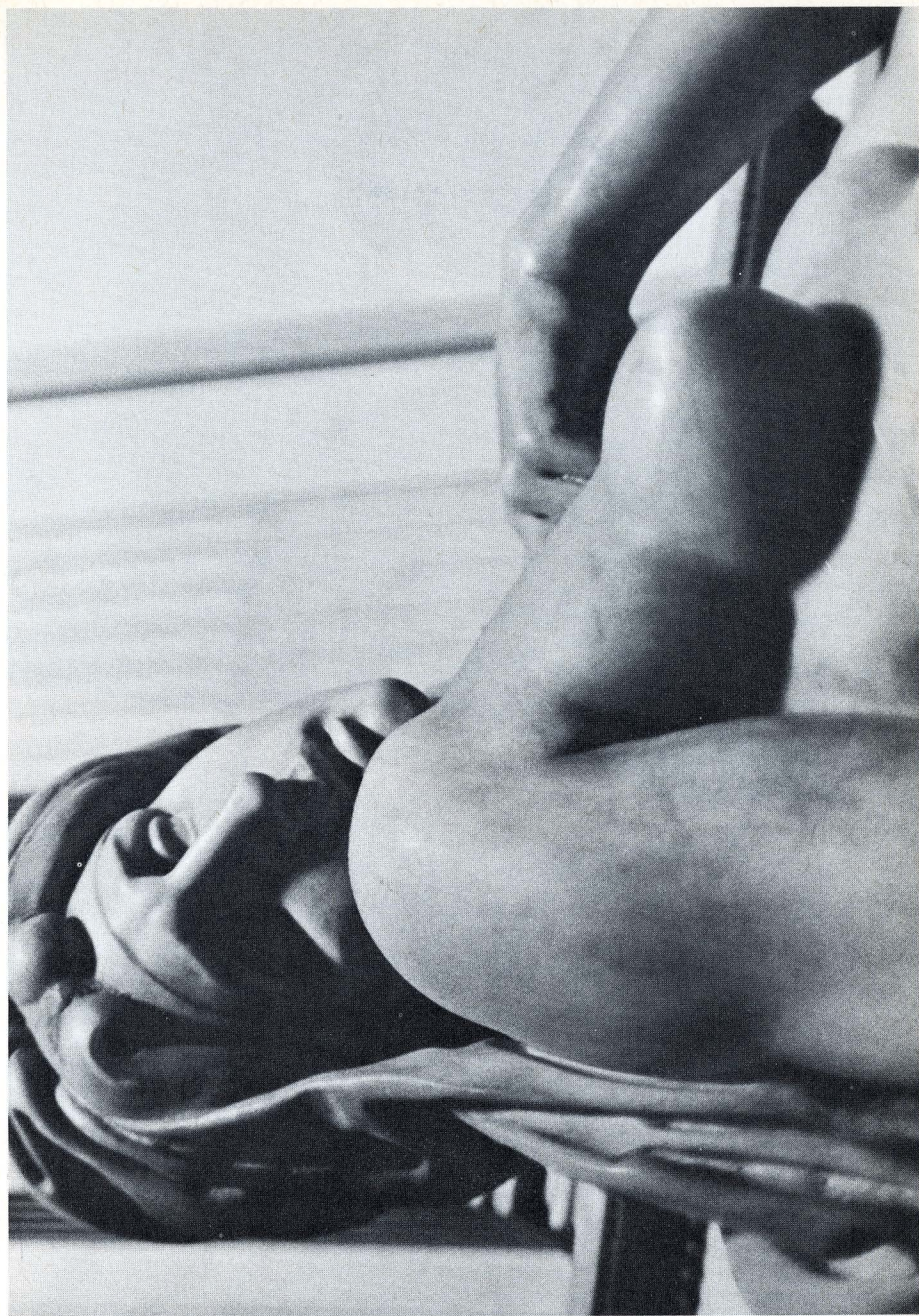
Russell Bateman / SCULPTURE IN ITALY

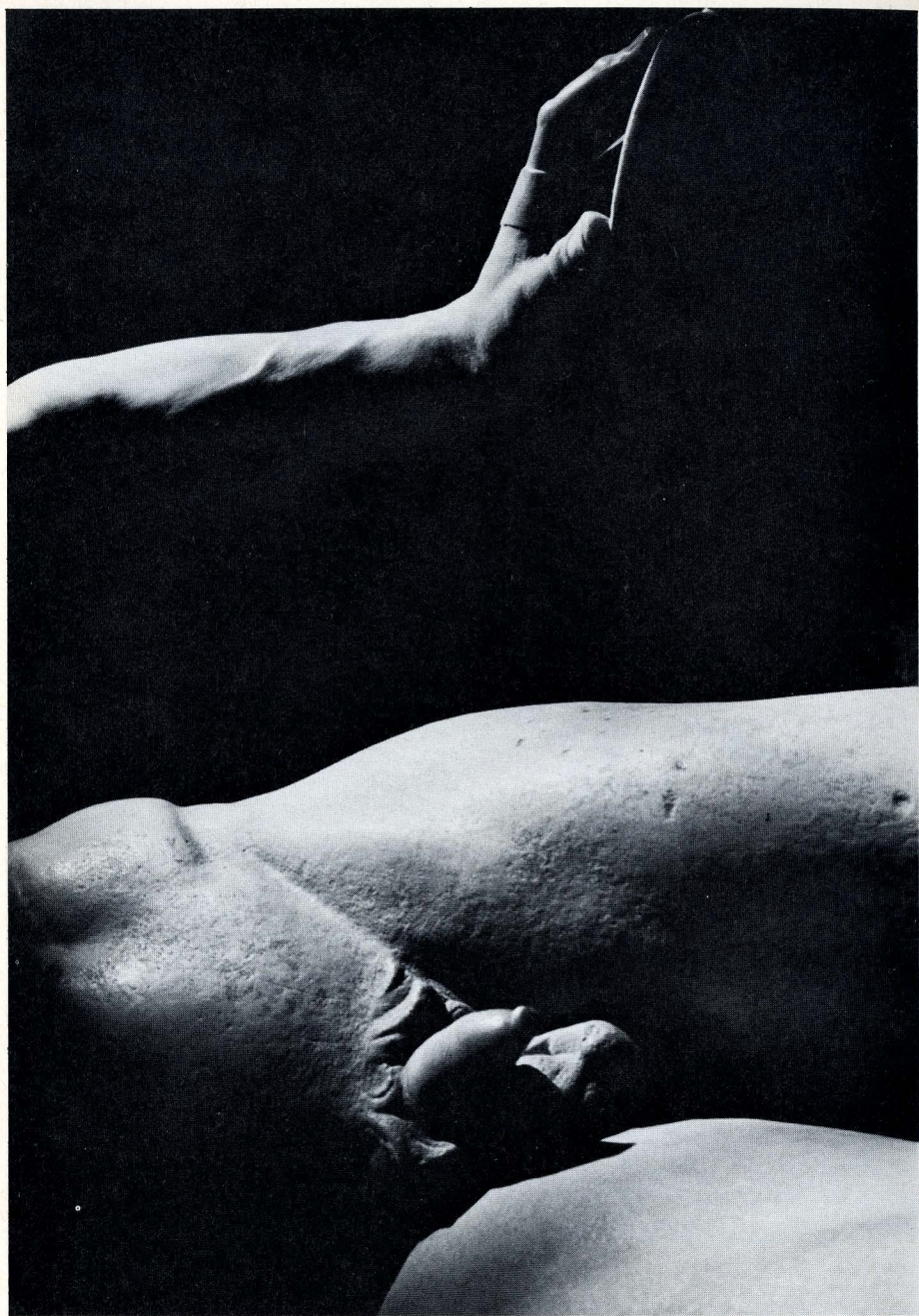
Russell took these photographs while attending Capilano College's *Summer School in Florence*, 1977, a course in Renaissance Art given by Josephine Jensen and Peter Higginson. In the marble and bronze sculptures, Russell found a wide range of moods, from "passion as stark as the thrust of a body," to "the subtle nuance of a face fleeing shadow."

IMAGES

Untitled black and white photographs.







Gladys Hindmarch /

FAIR HARBOUR MY EYE

I'm through now, Coco says, you can start cleaning the galley. Okay, I say. Jan, she shouts from the mess, the guys will be in for early mugup in half-an-hour. Okay, I say. And if you smell my pies burning, she says, will you turn the heat down? Okay, I say. I'll be back, she says, to pull them out. Okay I say. I pick up a full pail of water and Mr Clean. It's cold. I empty half, fill it with kettle water, fill the kettle with cold water and place it on the stove. Half-an-hour, I better do the ceiling first. I take off my shoes and stand on paper on the wooden counter. First I dampen and wring the rag. I wish I had brought gloves; my hands are flakey already from the Fels Naptha and they sting from Mr Clean and I'm just starting. Just starting.

I wipe the hatch that opens up just behind the wheelhouse: soot, thousands of grains of fine soot. Fair Harbour. Sunday morning. No sun. Just close grey clouds. Water runs down my arms. I rinse and wipe, rinse and wipe. I move the paper over with my feet and start the other hatch. I'm a rinser, I'm a wiper, I'm a rinser, I'm a wiper: that's what I am and that's what I'll be. I wipe the top of the shelf that holds all the plates and bowls. I guess I'll have to take them all out. Fair Harbour. Fair Harbour my eye. Why do people put up with things at work they never would at home? I think of dirty toilets in the print-shop, in hardware stores, in cafes that don't have public washrooms but I really had to go, in an electrical contractor's office; offices, all those offices people work in eight hours a day but it looks like no one really ever sees anything at all, dirty metal ashtrays, cheap glass, calendars that are old, things stuck up to cover cracks to cover walls, but like prints at doctors' offices seldom really interesting.

You are my sunshine, I start to sing, *my only sunshine. You make me happy when skies are grey.* My pail is dirty. I do one final long swipe across the top of two white pipes and am squatting to get down backwards when something lands inside my collar. Aaach, I scream. My shoulders tighten about it. I see Ken's feet through the hatch. Bastard. I pick the scrunched-up paper out and throw it up at him. Not hard enough. It twirls around and lands in my bucket. Pass me a coffee, eh Jan? No, I say, you can come down and get your own. C'mon, he says, just one little favour for an old old friend. I can't refuse him. I blush. I scramble down and step over to the stove. I feel shakey at all my edges. I hold my bum in. I straighten my shoulders. I try to pretend he means nothing to me at all. I bring the full mug to the counter. You still take both? I shout. Sure, he says, double everything. He pushes his hand down and I stretch mine out and up, up to those beautiful just slightly stubby fingers. Thanks, he says, see you later.

I check the kettle and fill it and put it on. I empty my bucket in one sink and fill it in the other and dump in more Mr Clean. What next? The crockery shelves. Do I have to take everything out? I won't get through this and the galley walls and the whole mess in an hour if I do. I won't. I'll leave it till we're using most of the dishes then it'll be easy to lift the rest and do the insides, but that's no good, Coco will be slicing turkey and Puppi will be running through but, what the hell, I'll do the outsides and the bottom now and figure out when to do the insides later. It's not hard, nothing is sooty, there's just a thin layer of grease that can't be seen but is there. There. I stroke down to wash, wring out the rag, up to rinse, and occasionally swirl where fingers, oily male fingers, have touched. Down one slat, down the other, swish at the bottom, rinse the rag, wring into the bucket, then up one slat and down the other. One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . five . . . done. Then the whole of the under. I stand on the deck and tackle it like I'm in a contest: who can, who can the fastest clean this board? I can, I can the fastest, I am the only one here. I empty the bucket again and do the slats over on the other side of the mess entrance where the mugs are. Do the under. And then over the top of the walk-in and down that wall toward the galley bucket.

Shit, it's full. Well I can't empty it now cause we're in port. I pull it out in front of the sink so I can get in behind. I lift the gukky cardboard and lean it on the walk-in door. The wall is filthy. A brush.

Use a brush. No. SOS. I grab the SOS. Isn't that a nautical term? The first one gumps up. I use more, more, more: all soapy, all gooey, but the crud is coming off. Come off, I say, beans, egg-yolk, sausage-fat, off, off, off. Talking to yourself, eh? says Beebo. What? I say. I can't get this stupid junk off. Don't worry about it, he says. No, it's got to come off, I say. He looks at me and laughs. It's very important, I shout to him, it's gotta come off. You're serious about dirt, eh Jan? Yes, I say very definitely and loud, *it's gotta come off*.

He picks up the cardboard, shoves it under where the mugs are, and goes into the walk-in while I rub and rub. He comes out with bread, onions, tomatoes and a cucumber and drops them on the counter. We're going to be having mugup, he says, you wanna come sit down with us? I can't, I say as a piece of paint comes off with the yolk. I want to get this done. You know what they say, he says, all work and no play makes . . . how does it go? I look up at him from my corner and see the gukky cardboard against the wall I just cleaned. I don't know, I say, it has 'dull' in it. He empties the coffee grounds in the bucket next to my bum. You wanna sandwich? he says, I'll make you a sandwich. No thanks, I shout to the wall, *shit*, the paint's all coming off. Take it easy, he says. I turn round to him and look straight up and over into his eyes. You look good when you get mad, Jan, yeah, you look good. I don't care how I look, I say. Sure you do, he says, sure you do.

He makes the coffee and I throw the last SOS pad into the bucket. I empty my pail in the sink. You shouldn't do that there, says Lefty from behind me. Why? I turn around and shout to him. He comes right up to me and touches my bust with his chest. Cause you'll clog it, sweetheart. I'm not your sweetheart, I say as my back digs into the metal of the sink, and stop feeling me. My, my, he says, boy are you hot. And I'm not a boy either, I shout as I shove him. Getting horny, eh? he says holding both my wrists. Not for you, I say into his mouth. C'mon lad, says Jock, can't you see you're not wanted? Give her time, says Lefty as he lets go, give her time. He snatches an onion from off the counter and starts to bite it. I turn from them and finish rinsing the narrow (it's only two feet wide) wall as the three of them make toast and sandwiches.

I haul the galley-bucket back into its space and pick up the cardboard that Beebo got for me a couple of days ago from someone on the dock after he realized I really didnt have any cause Ken and I threw them all over the first night out. I put it (all splattered and greasy on both sides) back to protect the bulkhead from more junk more fat more leftovers. Sure you wont change yer mind, Jan? says Beebo as he slaps HP sauce on a sandwich of beef sausage, onion, mustard, tomato, pickle and god knows what else — there's no way that's going to hold together. No, I hesitate. C'mon, says Lefty, I poured you a coffee. *Lefty poured me coffee?* He is standing next to the stove, two mugs in one hand and an onion-green-pepper-left-over-bacon sandwich in the other. You Promise you wont bother me, I say. Do *I* bother you? he says and laughs. You know what I mean, I shout back. I know, he says, what do you take me for? Just what you are, I shout and Beebo and Jock laugh. Lefty Quinton's no fool, he says to all of us. I walk out. No woman is bothered unless she wants to be, he says to them.

Laughing they pass me and I just stand there inside the mess. What did you say? I say to him. I'm just teasing, he says. I know that, I say with my hands on my hips. Well sit down then, he says, get a load off. I'm not sitting, Lefty Quinton, till I find out where *you're* sitting. Jesus F. Christ, he says and slams my coffee down on the end at Buck's place, then he brushes past me and goes to the outside far end near the door so Beebo's between us. Well, how do you like boat life? says Beebo to me. I just snicker. That's no answer, he says, we want to know. Everyone's arms are in the center grabbing cream and sugar and honey. We're waiting, lass, says Jock. It's a lotta work, I say, that's for sure . . . uhh . . . how come Ken's not here? Still washing up, says Beebo. That big monkey's been 'washing up' for a *long* time, says Jock. Christ, I think, is that where he took the coffee? Eh, lass, says Jock, you didnt tell us.

I like it, I say. You like us? says Lefty. Sure I do, I say, especially when there's someone between us. The others smile. We were wondering, says Beebo, what you did at university. My god, how do I answer that. Not much, I say, well it's kinda hard to describe in just a couple of minutes. Try, Beebo says. I dont want to, I say, it's, it's, it's, well it's different than school and way different than here. They're all looking at me as they chomp their sandwiches and I feel funny, I want to say I didnt like it at all but that's not entirely true. I read stuff I'd never read if I didnt go there, I say, and I went to lectures and plays and poetry readings. You read poetry? says Lefty. Sure, I say. They look incredulous, someone they know reads poetry? I like it, I say, I go to readings where poets read their own works aloud. You mean people pay to listen to some 'guy' recite about flowers and bees and love and all that stuff? says Beebo. Sure, I say, but it's usually free, it's good you know, it's not, well it's not about the flowers and bees and it's not like what you think poetry is, it's, well it's real. They laugh but with a type of curiosity. Give us some, says Beebo. Now? Why not? he says.

Let's see, I say, uuuhh. (The first lines that come are Corso's, *Should I get married, Should I be good? / Astound the girl next door / with my velvt suit and faustus hood?*, but that's all I know of it and for sure they'd laugh at the velvet. I think of William's *The Red Wheelbarrow* and Ginsberg's *Howl* — but I dont know much of that one either.) I know, I say, I only know a few lines. Say them, says Beebo. There's a man named Charles Olson who's a big, big guy and lives in Gloucester, Massachusetts, he wrote this:

*to dream takes no effort
to think is easy
to act is more difficult
but for a man to act after he has taken thought, this!
is the most difficult thing of all.*

That's poetry? says Lefty. Yeah, I say. I like that, says Beebo, do it again, why dont you? You mean it? Yeah. And I do, more certain this time, and just as I get to *for a man to act*, Ken steps in. I hesitate. Dont stop, Jan, says Beebo. *But for a man to act after he has taken thought, this! / is the most difficult thing of all.* Ken smiles at me and goes into the gallery. What are they like? says Lefty suspiciously. The

poets? I say. He nods. They're just like everyone else, I say, but I know it isn't true and it isn't what he's asking; they talk *a lot*, I say and I know that's true but doesn't say much to him; you wouldn't be able to pick one out on the street or in the pub, I say, they're tall, they're small, they're attractive, they're gangly, some are gay, if that's what you mean, but I bet you wouldn't be able to tell. I can always tell that, Lefty says in a mocking queer tone. I know at least one you couldn't, I say, he's a bit bigger than you and works in a warehouse for the I.L.W.U. Really? says Beebo. Sure, I say, poets are doctors and millworkers and insurance salesmen and teachers and carpenters and peapickers and almost everything cause nobody or hardly anybody can live off writing. That so? says Beebo. Yeah, I say. Any seamen? he asks.

I think Olson fished, I say, and Jack Kerouac worked in the merchant marine, but, I know — he's not a poet but he wrote all sorts of good fiction — you ever heard of Joseph Conrad? No one has. Well you might like him, he wrote *The Nigger of the Narciscus* and *Typhoon* and *Lord Jim* and many more. What's going on here? says Ken, leaning against the mess entrance. Jan's giving us a lesson, says Beebo. No I'm not, I say but I shut up. Ken comes and sits on the bench next to me and Jock. Did you ever go to one of these here

poetry readings? asks Beebo. Sure, he says. He doesnt look embarrassed or anything. What do you do there, lad? asks Jock. I listen, he says, everyone listens. That's not my idea of fun, says Lefty. Poems *can* be funny, says Ken, like Ferlinghetti's, you ever read about him? No one has. He's got a poem, says Ken, that'd make you split your gut, it's about a dog pissing and walking his way around San Francisco; he's got another one about underwear that . . . Underwear, interrupts Beebo, poets write about underwear?

It's not *just* underwear, is it Jan? it's about, you might say, the underwear symbolizes everything, Ken says. I dont like his tone when he says 'symbolizes' cause I think of it as a way/a word that belongs to university, but I also dont like it cause he's asking for help by looking straight at me. It starts off like this, I say:

*I didnt get much sleep last night
thinking about underwear.*

But then he brings all sorts of things in, the pope, and underground movements and Lady Macbeth and Castro and everyone wears underwear and it's, I dont know *how* to describe it, but it's funny and serious at the same time. Underwear, says Lefty, what a subject, I bet I could tell that poet a thing or two about underwear he's never heard of. I betcha could, I say and get up.

Dont go, says Beebo. I want to get me work done, I say to him and almost apologize to all of them. It's that time, says Jock looking at Ken who's just begun, but what I cant figure is why the old man called an early breakfast when we have so little to unload. He did it cause he didnt want us to sleep, says Lefty. That's right, says Beebo,

he's pissed off, excuse me Jan, he's angry cause he thinks we stalled at Zeballos so you would get another night lunch. So we did, says Lefty, we could have had that done. What's that? I ask. It's this way, says Beebo, we went just a little slow, not much mind you, but we stalled a bit so you and Coco would get more overtime. Really? I say. Yes, Beebo says. And both he and Lefty smile but Ken, who wasn't there, and Jock, who didn't come in to eat the second time either or maybe was knocked-off early, don't. Thanks, I say to Lefty and Beebo, you didn't have to do that though, I think Coco was very tired and it made no difference to me. Every little bit counts, says Beebo as he leans over to pick up Jock's mug and plate. He then follows me into the galley and places them on the counter as I bend to scrub again.



Judith Lodge / RECENT DRAWINGS

The photograph of trees began my series of ink drawings.

This body of work is about the process of 'coming through.'

The location is a fragmented, elusive setting.

The black and white images are splattered, pulled, washed and brushed. These marks are testimony to something irrevocable and final.

"I would like to walk out of my heart under the wide sky." — Rilke

For my father: James Robert Lodge.

— JUDITH LODGE

IMAGES

Photomontage of trees, ht. 6¼", w. 8¼", black and white, from an announcement to an exhibition of drawings held at The Surrey Art Gallery, April 29 to May 18, 1977.

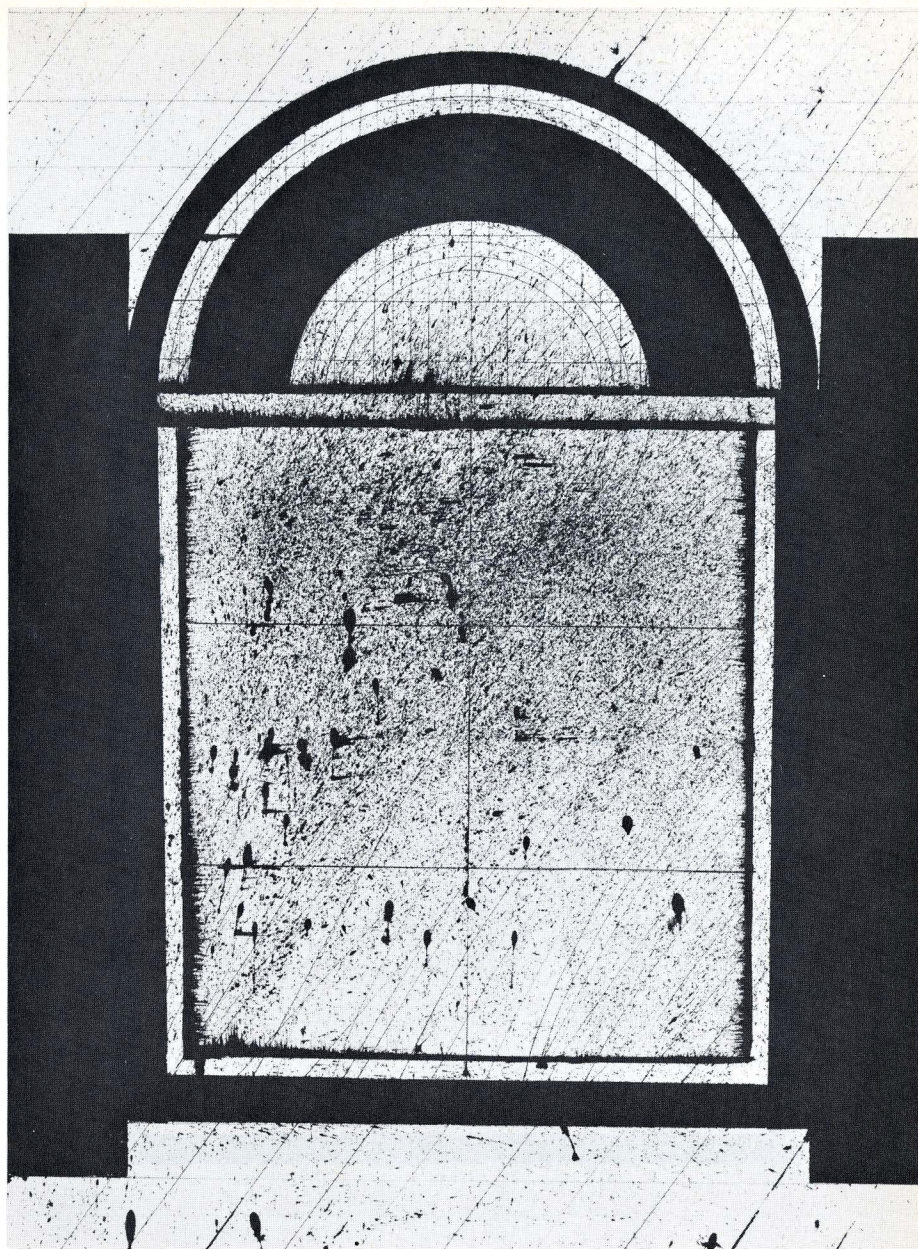
If Time Were Enclosed Surely Something Must Burst: "Time Chart #1," Spring 1977, ink on paper, ht. 30", w. 22".

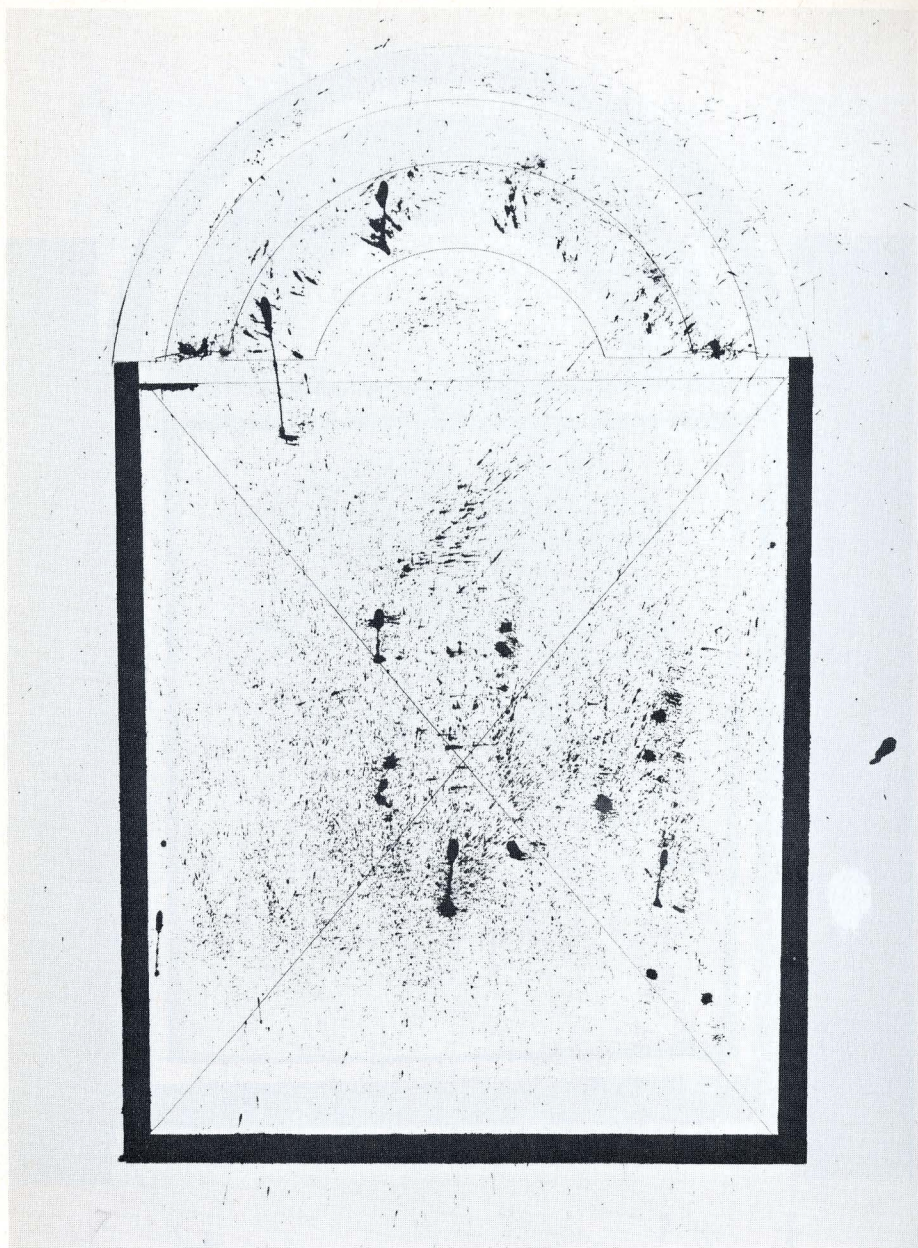
As above, "Time Chart # 2."

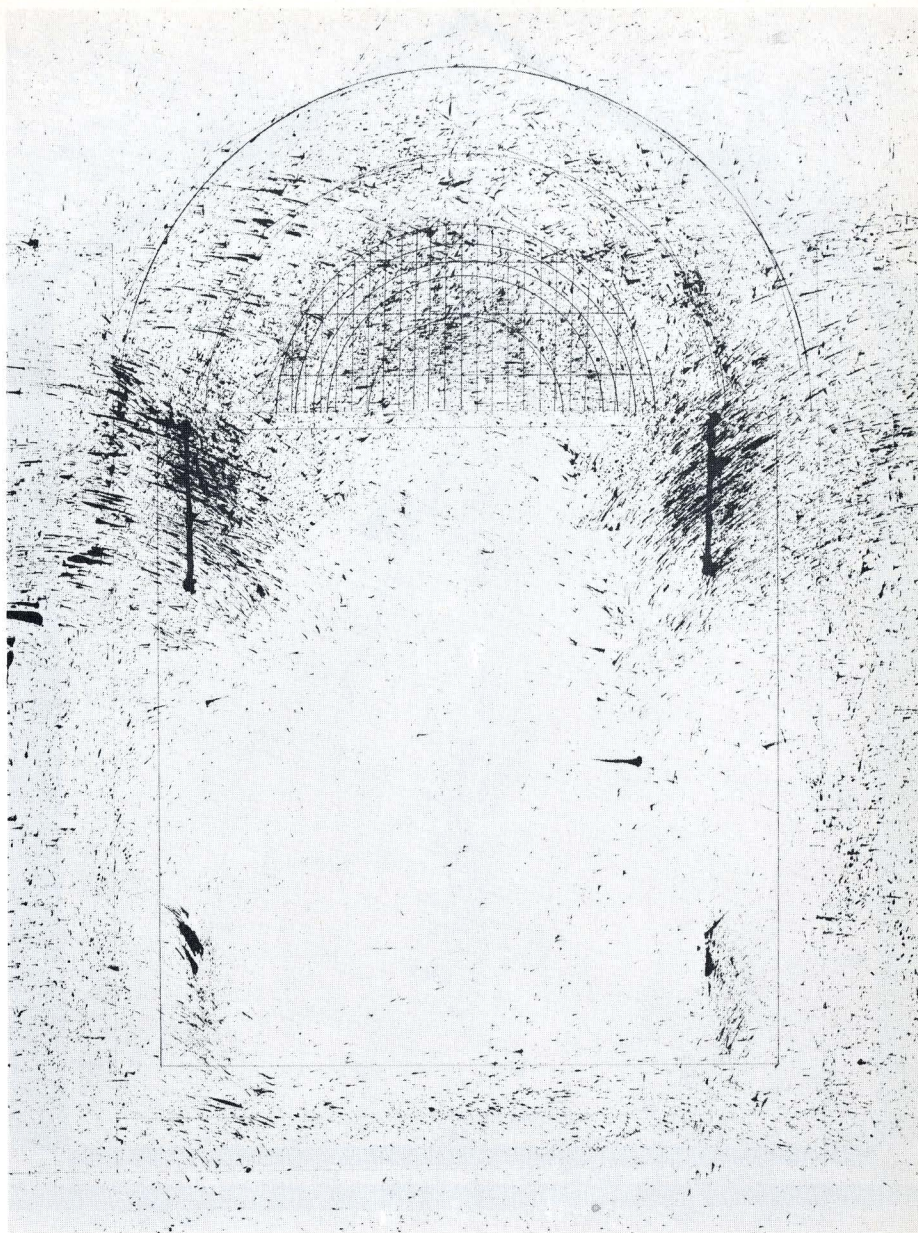
As above, "Time Chart #3."

As above, "Time Chart #5."

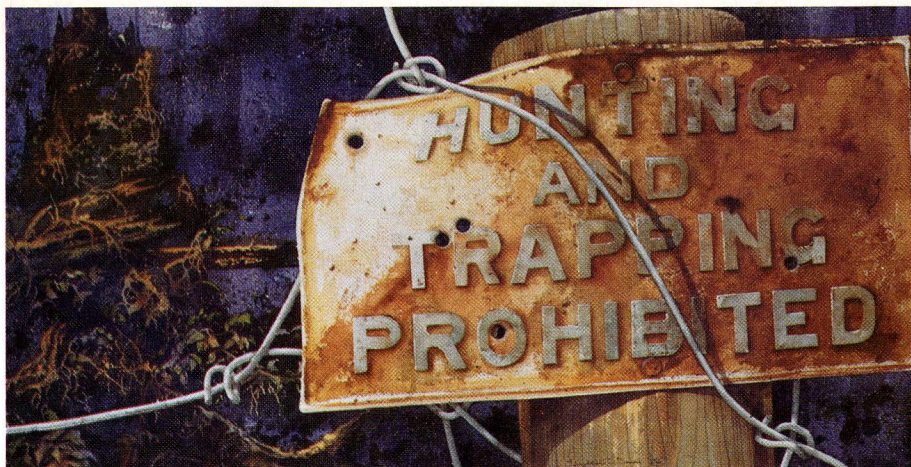
Photography: 2-5, Tod Greenaway











Leighton Davis / RECENT WATERCOLOURS

I might write a piece on my love of nature, my views on land ownership, or on freedom. I might even discuss my work or what I think of the art scene today, but to what purpose?

I only hope that through my painting I can allow people to see with my eyes. Whether the response is intellectual or emotional, if someone remembers my work then I have put myself across.

— LEIGHTON DAVIS

IMAGES

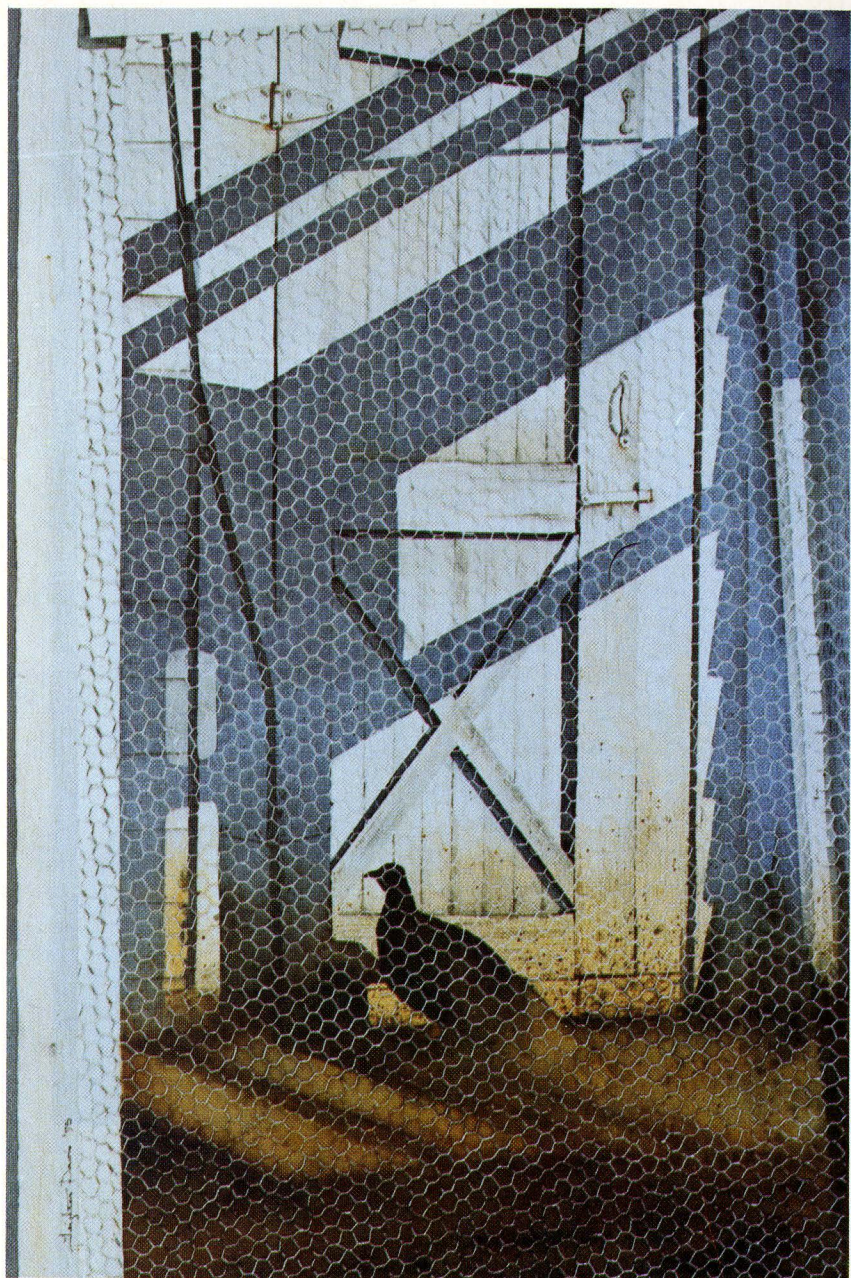
Hunting & Trapping Prohibited, 1975, Watercolour, ht. 23", w. 37'.

Lorne's Hand, 1976, Watercolour, ht. 29", w. 23".

The Pheasant, 1975, Watercolour, ht. 29", w. 22".

The Rocking Chair, 1977, Watercolour, ht. 38", w. 31".







Brian Fawcett / A SPECIAL SECTION

"History crowding against the Personal"





TEN ISLAND POEMS

Gabriola Island, 1977

Another thicket
of white roses
out my window

competes with lilacs, red poppies, wild
grasses & weeds. "My life".

But here the roses
take over, small & perfect
thousands of them.

I don't walk among them tonight
preferring the prospect
of this sheltered sea
the rocky shore

Before it reached me your heart
(hart, hurt) got hit

by a car. The dogs & ravens found it
in the bushes & my son

each day on the way to the store says
"It sure stinks." Why

do I make up these poems
a propos of almost nothing but you. Why

to tell you before it reached you
my heart (hart, hurt) got hit

by a car

It's another way of saying
love stinks. Its intentions
are not our own in this troubled world. Mostly
it gives aid & comfort
to our enemies. Out here
where the roses drop & stink
there is no television
but the memory of thousands of prerecorded sentimental journeys
hangs in the air of human love
like the smoke & stink from the pulp mills
a few miles distant from this haven
from the stink of love, the wrong kind
of heaven

The tide comes in the tide
goes out. A mild night
on Gabriola. At midnight
I walk out to sweep the beach
clear of the mess I made with the chainsaw
cutting beachlogs. The dog
growls at me & the kids
rapping an outboard & yelling in the bay
don't need to know. I know I love you
& you love me. So
what. What if someone had seen me
sweeping the beach? Or the dog
howled at the absent moon. Madness.
Nothing will deliver us
from these mild nights, the comings
& goings sweep us
before them

Goings on
on the island, fat
fishermen in the store
buy lures, some of the last hippies
on the planet sell pottery & vegetables
in the parking lot
the white roses out the window
drop in the rain
& last night's storm, more
driftlogs, foghorns while you slept in my arms
I can't say I've done my job well, I'm here
to rest
& the best
is yet to come. I take up
your hand
& you lead me
to the car
someone selling old junk & tarts
at the south road hall
let's go

White roses
in a winebottle some
still unfurled

the back door
slams shut, the dog
noses it, upset by the break
in his routine.

We are
creatures of habit
we creatures of the Rose.

The dog nuzzles my leg, whines,
uncertain & hungry. I've forgotten
to feed him, that's it, everything
has finally to do with food. I've forgotten

the Rose, the goddamned roses
a little water is all they need.

Salt water from
the ocean storm
or human tears that feed

the whiteness feeding
on the will
to be alone

Sunday Night July 9, 1977

Silence.

 The wind
dead. The drunks in the park
gone back to Nanaimo. The roses

turn to steel in the moonlight
in the light of human events
& real things

 the starfish
turn over & drift in
to suck the shore, despite
the falling current of the Moon
those last dim stars
never purple in the morning light

nothing left to guide us
but the steel
of human events
real things

descriptions of landscapes, emotions
don't help me love you.

The white roses are mostly gone
stale, that was
bullshit from back when . . . &
now all the dogs are barking
a bunch of drunks down the beach
are singing wild &
windblown that's how
you've grown. Who
can cling to
A ramblin' rose?

Walked out to look at the sky
hazy, the shooting stars, dynamite
in Nanaimo brighten the sky
to obscure Venus, both Jupiter
& Saturn visible

I was telling the dog which are planets
which stars & he wasn't looking, wanted
to lick my face didn't care
that the planets are constant the stars
flicker. The dog
doesn't celebrate anything, he eats
& he barks too much,

love each other with a purity
I can't know, worrying
about their futures apart
& how to get all our junk into the car
to drive back to the city
without forgetting or losing
pure love & the things
we live with

INTERVIEW

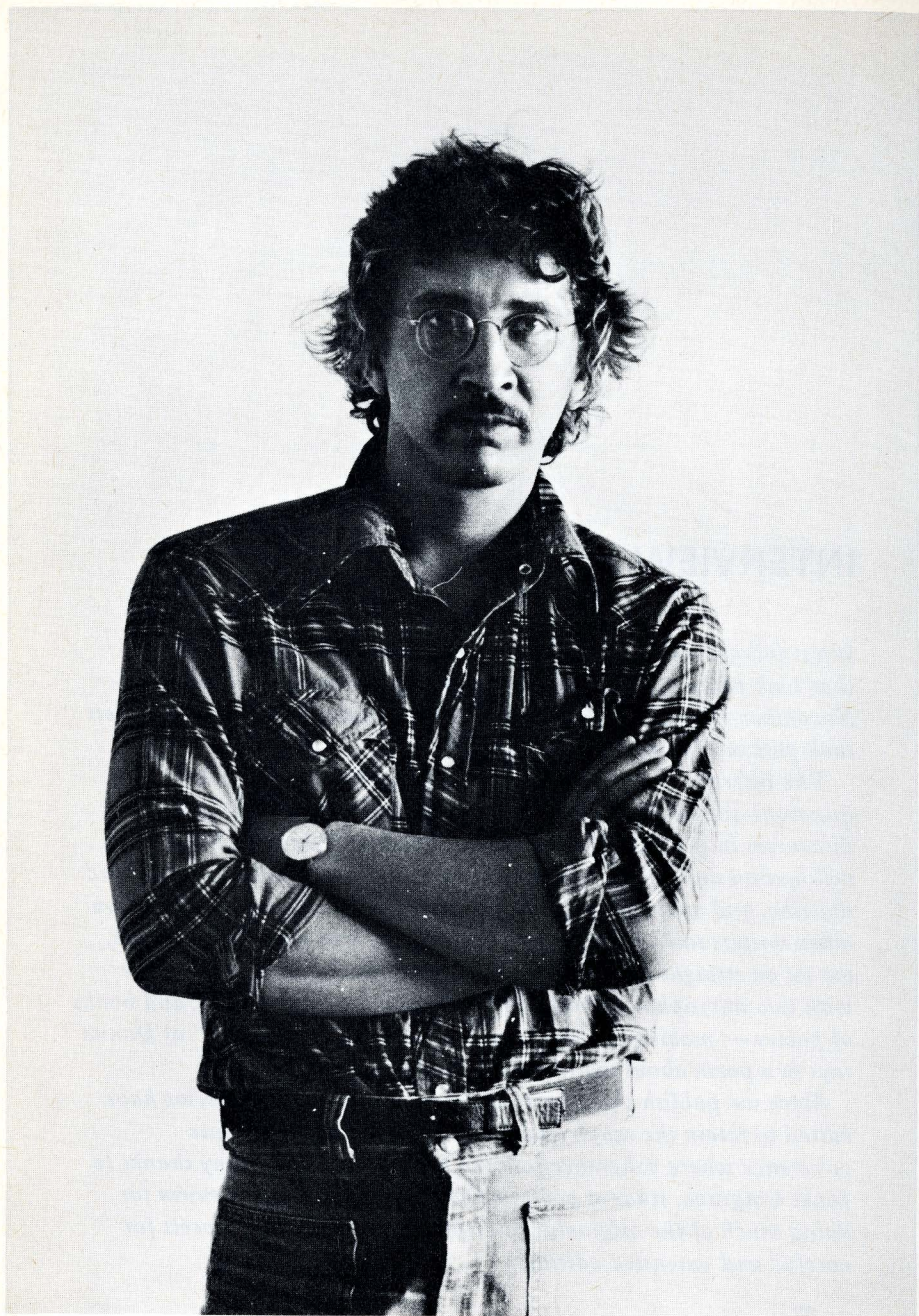
What follows is the rendition of an interview with Brian Fawcett that took place at Bill Schermbrucker's house on the evening of November 15th, 1977. Brian, Bill, Pierre Coupey and Sharon Fawcett took part in the conversation.

The interview encompassed not only the more or less polite questions-and-responses that appear here and in most of those discourses in print that fall under the heading "interview," but also colloquium and debate, irruption and disruption, shouting match and diatribe, and whatever other absurd and lovely commotion can go on when writers talk about the State of the Art. For three hours of this, we sat on straight-backed creaky chairs around a rectangular table with two microphones, bottles of wine, pages of manuscript, and books of poetry — making of that "one little room an everywhere" as Donne says in a poem about world and exchange and love.

Since we publish this interview for informative purposes, we have edited to retain the major queries and issues, and to recreate coherence where coherence faltered in the original. (Many thanks to Janet Cotgrave, student poetry editor of The Capilano Review for doing much of the original transcription, and to Brian Fawcett for careful and extensive editing.)

— SF

December 9, 1977



SF As a writer, as an editor, as a city planner, as a citizen — I'm curious about all those ways you are in the world and how your writing has, over the last three or four years, come to concern itself more and more with what I see in the 5th Serial Run as a kind of dictum: "The social the form of the poetics." I'm talking here about the connection between the social and poetics, but also about the formal if not didactic or polemical concern in your writing.

BF Okay. This is how it got started. In 1972 I was about two-thirds of the way through a Canada Council grant when I was offered, quite casually, a job as a community organizer. At the time I didn't know what that would involve, and didn't much care. I was bored, and I was also looking for a way out of some personal problems I was in the middle of, so I said, Okay, I'll take the job. The minute I got into it I recognized that I didn't understand politics either as a human being or as an artist. I didn't understand why people did things in relation to other people the way they did. I didn't understand the relationship between my own life and the sorts of things that have happened to me in my life, and I didn't know if those happenings had any relationship to the kinds of things I could see going on around me. At the time I was *philosophically* convinced that there *was* some sort of relationship between personal experience and what was going on around me in the city I'd been living in, at that time, for about seven or eight

years. I had no politics or values beyond the kind of democratic sentimentality that most of us acquire in elementary school and I was suddenly thrust into a situation where I was literally under the noses of the people who run the city. In retrospect it was a big privilege for someone as naive as I was about political life. So I became a community organizer — I read Saul Alinsky and began to explore some things other than personal power. And very quickly it became a matter of learning how to transpose or displace my personal power and of understanding the kinds of power one acquires by playing recognizable roles in a communal situation. The story “The Organizer” is very interested in the relationship between the role of a person organizing people to understand what *their* lives are about and what’s really in them, and what I now see very clearly as my function as an artist. You can only displace personal power by abandoning the privileges that accrue to role-playing, by trying to see things from the perspective of people who don’t have a privileged vantage point — sort of as a “public eye” instead of what we’re used to, as a private eye. After a couple of years it became clear to me that I had to abandon the privileges of being an artist as well if I was going to get beyond personality and the artistic conventions that both protect and alienate artists from the lives of everyone else.

SF The idea of the social being the form of the poetics involves the question of what responsibilities an artist has to the community. In much of your writing there seems to be a feeling of lamentation for the lack of passion and intelligence in communal or public life.

BF Yeah, there isn’t much intelligence, no interest in ideas, and that was one of the first things I discovered, or rather began to see as a problem I was going to have to take seriously. I also discovered that there is a direct relationship between this and the general misery that is rampant inside the personal lives of most people.

Despite the fact that most people spend most of their mental and emotional energies trying to make sense of their personal lives, nobody seems to be able to make them work because there aren't any procedures to secure common values or agreements about what's valuable and what isn't. The things that have been offered as values by the society we live in have always seemed to me pretty inadequate to the complexities we all face. Institutions like the Junior Chamber of Commerce are the standard form of community I grew up in and with, and I could see, pretty early on, that they didn't match the needs people have. The truth is, we have no way of having a decent relationship within and with the world outside ourselves. Inter-personally we don't, and on a political or social level there's even less. So how come? Well, it has to do with the fact that we live under a system of economic relationships which govern nearly all the other relationships; we live in a capitalist democracy in which the basic mode of human interaction is to exploit one another and our environments. You can see that going on in people's personal lives, you can see it out in the street, you can see it in government, you can see it everywhere, and it's unsatisfactory. The way I live and work brings me constantly into contact with that rather simpleminded truth, and it's led me to an increasingly critical view of contemporary human relationships and contemporary political and social institutions. At the same time it involves what you're identifying as sadness. But it's the critical view that's interesting, not the sadness.

BS Was it the taking of the job that changed your social outlook in that way?

BF Okay. You've got to recognize where I'm coming from. I have, to begin with, none of the "impressed" enculturation that Europeans and most Americans have. That's been an advantage to me. When I was younger, I read absolutely indiscriminately, meaning that I could study, say, Ezra Pound and Sartre without any sense of contradiction and without the clutter and interference of a traditional cultural taxonomy that would have told me I couldn't read and respect both. Then, secondly, I went to a liberal university and got trained as an academic practitioner of the New American Poetry. With all that under my belt I had no social outlook, or any really thought-out social or political values, only a natural scepticism and an innocence. I had a lot of personal values like "people ought to be nice to one another" — very vague. They retain a kind of vagueness that I've learned to protect because of the great attraction of intellectual force. There's always the temptation to simply get behind one of them and let it take you.

SF So what intellectual force did you get behind?

BF I haven't ever done that thoroughly. It's like asking me "are you a Marxist?" My response to that is to say "Huh?" Do I think Karl Marx is the most brilliant thinker in the last 200 years? Yes. Can anyone really carry on a relevant discourse that ignores Marxism? No. But I've got lots of misgivings about committing myself without reservation to any inclusive set of ideas about what's real and what isn't.

SF I think those misgivings are the things that contribute to a consistently lyrical voice in your writing, no matter how "socially aware" the poems are. There's the presence of that lyric and that's why I speak of the sense of lamentation, that it often goes beyond any particular ideology.

BF First of all, ideology and didacticism aren't the same thing. Nor do lyric and didactic writing exclude one another. If you watch the way this new stuff is working, you'll see that the minute the thought goes to one extreme (and it's constantly trying to reach extremes because that's where you get the goodies) it either gets lost or it calls up its contrary. For instance, the lyric (or personal) is still one radical, and the political is another radical, and if I can push the boundaries of the political I begin to see the whole field, and that's what I want. But I want the personal to appear *in the context of* the political. Organized Marxism seems to have the fault that it can't handle the personal. It ends up saying that individual life is not important, and if it doesn't say that directly it will say it structurally.

SF What your writing seems to say is that individual life is made unimportant by capitalism, and that that is somehow worse.

BF Yes of course it's worse because that's the form of government we live under, and as far as I can see it'll be like that for a few decades yet. Its effect is to make personal life unimportant and incomprehensible. It does so by merchandising the personal as if it were a commodity one can buy and sell, and finally it denies dignity to people's lives in a way that Marxism or organized communism would never do. But knowing that still isn't going to allow me to make the move of saying, Okay, I'm going to espouse Marxism as it's presently practiced. Marxism is hung up in an intellectual fundamentalism that resembles the Christian fundamentalism that empowered capitalism more than it does what Karl Marx intended. Marx believed that the purpose in overturning capitalism was so people could have good decent lives.

- BS* What's interesting me is that Sharon is putting a fair amount of pressure on you to "overcome" contradiction, but it seems to me that what energizes your critical writings and probably your poetry too, is that you are struggling with physical and intellectual contradictions. For example, in *Permanent Relationships* you staked out a very small territory and you're investigating the entire question of "fucking," and yet already tonight and at other times you've said that when life comes down to just fucking, there's something profoundly wrong with that.
- SF* What you're proposing to do is to push at the edges of both the public and private sensibilities, as a dialectical act.
- BF* Okay. You can't resolve a contrarium because it's painful or because you need simplification to support the other things in your life. It's still going to be there. Most of human life involves contrarities and the complexity of them just grows as I learn more. So it's fairly natural to me that with the increasing politicization of both my life and my work I haven't decided that it's all political.
- SF* I want to get back to the business of "the social the form of the poetics." I'm not clear whether you're proposing that the social *ought* to be the form of the new poetics or whether you're saying that anybody who's writing poetry and is involved in the new poetics is also interested in the social to the extent that you want, in which they recognize that "poetics are caught in profit and the complexity of technology" as a first fact. Are you saying that poetry that doesn't recognize those things is a poetry that is not to be recognized as poetry?
- BF* Let's put it this way: I do believe in an intellectual realm for which as artists (or as people) we're responsible. The intellectual materials of the 1970's are fully cognizant of the effects of capitalism and of the importance of communal reality.
- SF* Well, I don't believe in full cognizance, I believe in the full value of the incognito as well, not as a form of monstrosity or threat or ignorance but as something integral to reality.
- BF* I'm not quite sure what you're saying.

SF There's a distinction between the communal and the political. I can't imagine any art, let alone poetry, that's not in some fundamental way informed by the condition of the communal life. But it does seem to me that at the root of the poetics you're talking about is a rational and sociological intellect.

BF Well, that's not true. It's like telling me I'm not a poet. What I'm saying basically, is that the poetics of the New American Poetry believed that the psyche, that the life of the mind, can stand alone. My proposition is that it cannot. And that's about as far as I'd go with it, and if you check through the work it isn't being any more certain about it than just that. It's also saying that the mind exists, which is what Marxism keeps on denying in practice. And incidentally, the place the New Criticism has in this, is that of a petty industrial squabble. This isn't a literary argument. The psychological now has to meet — and I don't mean it has to overwhelm by its force or stand second to, just meet — the issues in our lives that, given the kind of human and environmental resources of this planet, are now involving us in a communality that we have not had to face intellectually or in any other way until now.

SF You're talking about a poetry that for you contains a sense of what it is to be a public as well as a personal being; you're not rejecting poetry that doesn't have political description for its content. But your insistence on "understanding" as a primary criterion concerns me. It implies an attempt to disarm what I've called the incognito, which rational consciousness cannot approach, or can only do so on its own terms.

BF I can answer that in two ways. The first is to simply state that there's not much evidence in my work that indicates I'm afraid of what I don't know. The second is to dismiss the whole question of Negative Capability by making the prescriptive statement that at this point in history artists ought to be more interested in what they can do with the material conditions of human life. That doesn't exclude all those marvellous things in the shadows, it's merely an admonition that there are more pressing problems in front of us all. I'm a student of Robin Blaser's, don't forget, and I still respect his work and his inquiry into the world. But I'm responsible for my own life and intellectually I'm responsible for the activities of my own generation. The mandate and the problems of the last generation are different from the one I'm part of. It's time we grew up.

BS Let's shift the ground a little. In what you're writing and saying there's the implicit desire to have people listen to poetry. What I would like to ask you is, given the kind of generosity you extend to the world now as a poet with a social vision and a sense of social responsibility, how do you attempt to write poetry that people will listen to?

BF That's a problem because at the same time as I'm committed to making that demand, like most poets I'm ill-equipped to deal with it. Most political writers today are not working with poetry, they're working with drama or with the novel — forms that most people can deal with. I have to concede initially to having fundamentally academic and intellectual intentions. I'm trained to be a lyric poet, and after years of not liking it very much, I also now recognize that I have the senses of a poet. I'm not naturally a dramatist or a novelist or even a propagandist. I don't know the answer to the question you're asking. A large part of my energies is oriented to the theoretical, not in the contemplative sense but in the sense of how do you actually deal with the world, what are the methods, and how do you empower poetry to be as effective and as public as Science in its God help us belligerent and brutal way is. We have to reform this world — as in re-form — we have to remake the world we live in. If poetry doesn't any longer have the tools to figure out how to give people a paratactic sensibility that allows them to see the connectedness of the personal and the political and even the cosmic, we aren't going to have human lives. This planet will simply not survive, and I think it's that urgent.

PC I think the thing that Brian has been doing in his poems and in *NMFG* is to call forth the question of how we make our lives real, and what comes into that. The reason why kids can't even listen to the TV news or the radio news or aren't even questioning the things that go on in their high schools and why they can't read the newspaper let alone read a poem, is that they don't believe in the reality of their lives. In short, they haven't ever been given the possibility, or been forced into the possibility, or entertained to the possibility, or seduced into the possibility, or kicked in their asses until they know the possibility is there to listen to themselves even before they listen to a poem or to a radio broadcast or read something or whatever.

BF You can't listen to your life and you can't listen to yourself unless you can listen to and understand your life in the context of the rest of the humans around you, and that's exactly what capitalism denies us.

PC Yes. But it denies first of all the possibility of listening to yourself. You don't have a voice and you don't have ears. What it is first of all is a means of depriving the senses. Second of all it's got the techniques to deprive us of sensibility, and as a consequence of those first two, it deprives us of being active alive thinking beings in the world. So when we encounter Brian as a practicing poet who has obviously affected us, it is that he as well as Stan Persky remind us that even the people who have been academically trained don't listen enough and don't bring enough into themselves, don't bring enough attention to themselves and to their relationship to the world to really know what's going on.

SF Well I don't know who the hell has the handle on what's *really* going on. It seems to me that any poetry we can take seriously has dealt more or less explicitly with the question of a new heaven and a new earth.

PC Yeah, only it's the substance of it we've got to get to and the superficial of it we've got to get rid of. Out of *Creatures of State* we get the sense of a drive for (a) a new poetic, (b) a new politics, (c) a new city, and finally out of that, some kind of new vision. It's something that obviously we're all concerned with because we've been feeling in the last year that vague shift in the winds of poetry. One of the things we've got to talk about when we're talking about a new poetic is the particulars and the technique, the line lengths and breaks, the use of metaphor. In listening to the more prosaic line that the serial runs have taken, I saw no necessity for these line breaks which give them the appearance of a lyric poem. And that is a matter of substance, not a matter of appearance, Okay? And when I hear these poems, and listen to the things we've been hearing in the last year, I think what we're hearing is the questioning of the whole enterprise.

BF The whole free enterprise system.

PC Yeah, sure. And poetry as it's practiced now is free enterprise, and that's what you're saying is wrong.

BF For sure. There's now the problem of the training which I suspect is common to any writer today, which has to do with Olson's Projective Verse, which is no longer open at all, ironically, or maybe typically. I'm subject to its conventions and they don't work in my favour or in anyone's. Conventions are supposed to help us interact with whatever is around us. But the conventions of poetry don't. I hassled, for instance, with the notion of the perfect poem for years. At this point, though, the only poetic convention I'm interested in is disjunction. I see the disjunction occurring because I want its contrary, parataxis. I see the world shifting, see the synapse points, and if I catch it there my line breaks are accurate. But that isn't often — most of the time there's the edge of the page and if I go off that it won't be writing anymore, it's scribbling on the desk. But when it works, there's a parataxis; the line breaks are suddenly saying, Okay, bang, here's a jump in the Real. Watch out! Because something extra happens when I break those lines. In a funny way I'm reversing the normal identification of parataxis, because we're all in the condition of not knowing, as Pindar did, when they're *supposed* to happen.

BS From the earlier poems, which were far more economical, there's a change in the recent poetry. It's more fluent and less concerned with the particular placement of individual lines, and phrases in a line. Does that indicate a shift away from technique to content?

BF Not exactly. It's coming from the effort to hold onto more things. If you look at *The Opening*, I was writing those long lines because I desperately wanted to believe in a world that had long lines in it, that, willy-nilly, had continuity. Consequently, that's what the book records, the belief in a world that I didn't want to end. Similarly, if you go to *Permanent Relationships*, the same kind of willful technique is operating. Only from the opposite end of the stick. During the entire composition of that book, I showed the poems to no one, and talked to no one about them, and not surprisingly the lines are short and the language very clipped. The book was written in isolation, and I had to fight for and with each word, because basically I didn't want to talk to anyone in those days. The book is about refusing to talk to anyone.

BS It's certainly not a book about flow.

BF The trouble with both is that I was getting used by the lines and they were building, almost by themselves, a reality that didn't meet the facts that were there. The convention of poetry at that time knew more about me and my abilities than I did about them. Now I've gotten to the point where I've lost my awe of Poetry and I want to know what *I* can do with lines. Fuck determinism.

BS But you're not about to abandon what you've learned, you're just frustrated. There's a frustration with the end of the page, so you go on to the idea of serial runs because there's more to say.

BF I solved that by writing on teletype rolls, where the end of the page isn't a problem — the poem just goes on until it ends naturally, instead of having to cope with that nonsense about, oh, holy shit, here comes the bottom of the bloody page. But to be serious about it, the use of an extended compositional serial method allows more than the use of words and sentences, speech born of one's own thought and that derived from external sources (dictation). It allows one to recompose relatively complete poems and fragments of poems within a structure similar to but larger than the single serial poem or series — the purpose of which is to provide a range of content both larger than and/or external to the single lyric poem. Each run, then, is a serial structure which becomes the seven runs and eventually *Creatures of State*. The purpose of stretching the boundaries of the serial poem is to attempt to overcome a built-in limitation of serial composition; that the Serial Poem requires a privacy in composition that makes it difficult to amass the concentration necessary to write and yet remain clearly in touch with ordinary reality.

PC In terms of where we're coming from and in terms of where we want to go, which is very important in your work, we've got to make some of the ground clear. Back of tonight's discussion is a whole year of intangible conversations, I mean, intangible to an audience who might read this. That is, I feel like just saying straight off the bat to our eastern friends, don't ever bring up to me again, or to any of us again, the whole question of Black Mountain poetics. It's been gone as a directive for five years. What we're talking about here isn't a rebellion against Black Mountain or the New American Poetry. It's something new.

BF Stan Persky was the guy who turned me on to what the New American Poetry was about. Charlie Olson, he said, was a guy who, around 1950, suddenly understood, for about three years, what was happening. That's very rare, rare anywhere, and even rarer within poetry in the last 200 years. He understood what was to be done, and not just in poetry, in the world. Pound never did; none of the others ever did. Olson understood that what was to be opened up *in his time* was the freedom of the body.

PC Proprioception.

BF Yeah. And that was what the 1960's were all about. We found out that personal liberation was marvelous, and that finally it didn't work. What we found out was that finally the forms that are outside individual will are more profound than the personal. In other words, collective and external forms of experience will dictate the experience of the personal and they dictate the limits to which liberty can go. So you end up at Kent State. They said, Okay, you can't be free because it threatens the interests of the people who've got the goodies, you must be governed. And at that point the necessities of understanding shifted. Government became the prime issue, and you can include everything from Ecology to the police messing around with the mail in that. The truth is, we have to accept government because there's so damned many of us. The question that's up in the air becomes one of how we will govern and be governed, not how to be free. So, Pierre, you were talking earlier about the absence of what we would conventionally refer to as The Line. That's an interesting word. What is a line? A line of bullshit? A party line?

SF Where you happen to end an utterance.

BF It's how you govern an utterance. Or whether the utterance is terminated by conventional nonsense or some external force like the police, or the side of the page. It's the same question I've said everything is tied to.

SF Or where an utterance fails.

BF Exactly. How do we get effective utterance, not just out of poetry but out of the whole paraphernalia of human language and interaction. I'm suggesting that we drop this dorky notion that imagination is something that arrives with us from the realms of mystery or whatever . . .

SF Well, you're talking about inspiration . . .

BF I'm proposing that there's a purposive taxonomy that can be worked out, and that we can and should stop mystifying the problems of composition.

PC Inspiration is just another word for accuracy.

SF There are two takes on the lyrical — the Beautiful and the Ugly.

BF There's a third one which is the True.

PC Yeah, the Accurate.

SF Then the True lies in the incorporation of the Ugly into the Beautiful, and vice versa? That's a lyrical thrust . . .

PC Whenever we've had the term "lyrical" I've wanted to translate that into the broken heart that is not private, but public.

SF Otherwise one is simply unknown. I guess it depends on what one conceives to be the most invisible, that is, the personal impulse or the public demand. The admonitions in this writing are political but behind that the language of the sorrow is lyrical, or as you see it, personal.

BF But Pierre is saying that it has to go to the political, public,
communal for resolution. I agree. (Reads) :

My heart will break before it comes
the revolution will not come before
all of it is broken, the revolution
will break all hearts.

Let the hearts
of poets & politicians twist & break
for their poor imagination
of what we might have

let them pump into the streets
let us see what we have, this

pattern for subdivision
& progressive alienation
of public lands

despite the discourse
of all those white sheets on the clotheslines of the poor
behind Main street
whipping in the polluted breeze.

All our plans will turn red
from the gore of the Personal

& we will lift it, finally
from us

breaking our hearts (Creatures of State, p. 125)

SF Your heartbreak in those poems is your personal heartbreak

BF . . . in the face of material reality.

SF In the face of material reality which is heartbreaking.

BF I'm more interested in the material reality.

BS I want to offer Brian a chance to respond to Bowering who is accusing him, in *A Short Sad Book*, of seeking, as the phrase is, "Love in the Shadows." He's constantly making a kind of stock figure of Brian and I want to hear Brian answer Bowering in terms that both understand.

BF Okay, first of all you have to recognize that George is running a practical joke on a practical joke. The novel is a practical joke on Canadian literature, which is a practical joke. The second thing is that George can't imagine actually fucking a tree. He doesn't have that kind of literalism.

BS But beyond that, he's making some kind of statement about your poetry.

BF I don't know. I regard George's "attack" as a kind of fond admonition from the other side of the same desire. Actually, I think George would *love* to fuck a tree. The only error he's making is the error most practical jokers make: he's attacking something that doesn't any longer exist. That happened eleven years ago. The literalism of that has grown into what we're seeing in *Creatures of State*.

BS You're being accused of being a Romantic. How do you feel about that?

BF It's not a love of shadows or a fear of shadows, it's a preoccupation with the relationship between light and darkness. If I'm constantly ducking into the shadows it's because the Shadow is the form and power of the system of relationships that determines the way our personal lives will go, meaning, mostly, Capitalism. I'm sick and tired of holding people responsible for the things that happen to them, the things they do. It is cruel to do so. Holding people responsible implies that I believe in the omniscience of individual will and enterprise. And that's shit. If you keep wanting to go over this question, that's where I'll go. (Reads) :

What of our lives, our bodies
wasting in misery we can see
no reason for, simple despair
despite the new car parked on the street, the T.V.
on & making dinner in the kitchen.

History crowding against the Personal.
The things that break hearts
also exist in history. But the artists
have forgotten history & the politicians
have forgotten the broken & breaking
hearts. & those of us who know both
or learn that broken hearts mean nothing
unless history mends the world that breaks them
ask of our lives, our bodies wasting
in misery, more than simple despair
we can see complex reasons for

(*Creatures of State*, p. 119)

I guess I want to hang in there in the middle of *that* construct, because that's where the understanding we need lies. You have to get up there in the middle of those two things and goddamn well hang there with all the pain and anxiety and terror it involves. That's the one thing poetry can do that nothing else can do.



BS As a writer you're in a period of crisis. What is the crisis and why?

BF The crisis is one of what to do next. The forms of expression given to artists, and particularly to writers, are unsatisfactory. I'm not arrogant enough to say I know exactly what the cure is, only that what we're doing and what's been done ain't enough. It isn't going to change the basic condition of our lives. I think that crisis goes beyond my own work. It's a general crisis in Art. *Creatures of State* tells me I can't continue to work conventionally, that I've got to go further into what I'm doing, although a lot of the work since then has been involved in working out some of the immediate aspects of the things raised in *Creatures of State*, the "Invisibilities." I'm not entirely satisfied with what *Creatures of State* has done, I mean, it ends so grandly that it makes me a little nervous. So I want to explore, in a more focused way, some of the world — the pleasures and pain one experiences in that — and the objective pain of being in an unjust world. The prose piece, "The Organizer," tells me I'm working on a novel though I don't quite know what a novel is anymore.

BS Does the interest in writing a novel come out of your experience of writing serial poetry?

BF I hope it would be informed by what I know about narrative from the serial form, but I don't think the one leads to the other.

BS The novel is a larger format.

BF The novel is in some ways a smaller format because it involves a number of aspects that make the writing purely conventional, like pretending people are talking all the time, so you're not up against fundamental questions all the time you're writing.

SF Don't you think it would be quite easy for you to write a novel at this point?

BF I would have thought that but it isn't turning out to be that easy. I'm not very gifted at some of the things you need to be a novelist, and since I'd want to write a "popular" novel, meaning an accessible one, things like writing dialogue drive me crazy. And how to use metaphor, and so forth. I've been so much involved in melding the textures of language and meaning, I don't quite know what to do with that preoccupation. You can see it in "The Organizer." I have problems with the interpolation of the peculiar world you're in when you're writing — which is quite different from the physical material you are writing about and the ones you're making up, and it keeps on interfering. The story begins to explore that problem quite directly.

BS Bowering's *A Short Sad Book* was concerned with a lot of these problems, wasn't it? George was really writing a novel about refusing to write a conventional novel, or about how it wasn't possible anymore.

BF Yeah, for sure. But that novel is going to puzzle people for years to come, because it's hard to figure out if George really is pursuing some very fundamental truths about narrative and/or fiction because the novel is so cluttered with extremely personal detail and with obscure gags. It puzzles me when I'm not doubled over with laughter. But at the same time what I really respect about George Bowering is his willingness to experiment when he damn well doesn't need to. There was a period about eight years ago when George could have been a national figure in the way that Margaret Atwood is. I'm not sure whether it would have been more fun, but in any case he didn't do it. He went on with his fundamentally arcane, sometimes nasty, and usually fascinating experiments, and he keeps on doing it and it's more interesting now than it ever was. George has a lot of guts as a writer.

SF There seems to be, from what you've just been talking about, and particularly with the publication of Duncan McNaughton's *A Passage of St. Devil* and *Sumeriana*, not only a new movement but the passing away of something else. I'm curious to know where you think poetry's going.

BF Duncan McNaughton's books, as Karl Siegler pointed out, marks both the end and the fulfilment of the New American Poetry. What occurs in Duncan's work is very frightening because it's exactly what Olson wanted but could never quite achieve — a totally animate universe. And it's scary, it's nihilistic because of the way the orders can cross into one another. What the hell can you do with the New American Poetry after you've read Duncan McNaughton — except enjoy it and the contemplative pleasures it makes possible. With all due respect for Duncan, and I have lots, I'm pretty sure he doesn't know what to do now that he's done it. Duncan's capacity to do etudes on any of the masters of the New American Poetry means that it's all over, that all the formal and intellectual possibilities in it have been explored.

BS I'd like to hear more from you on your contemporaries.

BF Well, let's see. There's no point in talking about the writers I admire and enjoy. There's lots of those. So I'll talk about the ones I think I can learn from. McNaughton's one, and Stan Persky's another. Stan is very much the contrary of McNaughton. He can do almost anything Duncan can but he chooses to work from a deliberate perspective. Persky is challenging the whole procedure and the whole possibility of the New American Poetry, and from a perspective that has much more substantial and profound values. That interests me. Then there's Barry McKinnon. Barry, since you've wanted to talk about lyric poetry, is the guy at the centre of that. Barry's utterly willing to sit inside that uncertain universe and whine and fuss and fume and get one line out at a time — he's the only one I know who can deal directly with the uncertainty of poetry without doing anything arbitrary. The other person I've learned from, particularly in the last three or four months, is Pierre, who's been putting together drawing and writing more successfully than anyone I've heard of. He's been turning what, if it had been left to itself, would be fundamentally sentimental and enclosed writing into something very moving by using those incredible color drawings to deconstruct the speech. It's fascinating to me even though I can't work visually because I can learn from the chances Pierre will take. I'd also include people like Christopher Dewdney, David McFadden, Victor Coleman, and Pat Lane.

BS I would have thought, looking at your stuff, that Persky has been a strong influence and that the "Phuoc Bhin Statement" has been particularly important to you.

BF Yes, although the most important impression Stan has made on me occurred in 1968. In the middle of one of the writer's meetings we used to have in those days, and in response to this very elegant and closed poem I'd written about angels and birds and essentially the kinds of images I still use, Stan said "You can't write a poem any longer that can't have a line in it like 'please pass the tuna fish sandwiches.' " You've got to be able to fit that into any poem without it looking out of place. A poem without that possibility is not contemporary speech — that is, if your poem has a tuna fish sandwich suddenly land in the middle of a line and you panic and throw it out, say Yuk, you're on the wrong track. Sacred speech, which is what poetry was always supposed to be, now has to account for, be written in the vernacular. That's nothing new, except that it hasn't been practiced. "De Vulgaris Eloquentia" is Dante's demand.

BS You've worked extensively over the years as an editor, first of *Iron* and lately as Gordon Lockhead of *NMFG*.

BF I'm not the editor of *NMFG*.

BS Who is Gordon Lockhead, then?

BF Well, Lockhead has been around since 1969 and did a number of things before he got involved with *NMFG*. Tom Grieve and I used him first to hoax an English professor who thought he had Shakespearean Criticism in the bag. He'd quote all his esoteric critics and Tom and I would respond by quoting long passages from Lockhead to contradict him. He showed up a number of times in that kind of a context and I think there's probably still subject cards in the SFU library for some of his articles. Some of them were quite brilliant and a few actually got written — one in particular about Chaldean Botany and its influence on Marvell, Donne and Pope got to about 60 pages. Since then he's published reviews in places like *Open Letter* and has sent poems to a number of magazines. He became the editor of *NMFG* one January day in Bill Hoffer's bookstore. When *NMFG* started he was actually four people — myself, Bill Hoffer, Bob Rose, and Tom Grieve.

BS What happened?

BF Well, that's an interesting story. I'd been talking about doing a magazine for some months and Bill suddenly challenged me to put up or shut up, and generously offered the use of his typewriter and his Gestetner. The idea was to keep it simple and small enough so that it could come out regularly without using government grants or any snazzy and expensive and time-consuming printing techniques. The other important intention I had for it was to get people talking — the people clustered around "movements" or government-funded organizations or agencies of one sort or another. The writing scene most often resembles a very small pond overcrowded with bullfrogs all bellowing aggressively at one another for territory, which is ridiculous since writers have no *real* status or importance. So the first mailing list tried to ignore all those territorial boundaries. But the joint editorship didn't work. Tom Grieve went to Johns Hopkins and Bill never did do anything except lend us the equipment, and Bob left town. At the same time Bill was rightfully getting nervous about being identified with the magazine so I went out and bought a typewriter and after that Lockhead began to take his present identity — running the stencils off, answering most of the correspondence and making the editorial decisions.

SF How is *NMFG* different from *Iron*?

BF *NMFG* comes out regularly and it's politically more alert. *Iron* went through a number of phases — from being utterly and adolescently pretentious to, towards the end, being mainly interested in hoaxes. *Iron* had a huge complement of people to put it out but no one except the people typing it did any work. It got printed through all kinds of half-legal means because nobody had any money and we were all too middle-class to do real production work. The first 15 *NMFG*'s came out monthly and people would actually expect it — I'd go down to the bar on Friday night and if I didn't have it people would be mad at me. The other thing is that more people read it than there were copies printed, which is extremely unusual — readable news that people want!

BS There are similarities and differences. *Iron* would publish a note to the effect that it would come out whenever it felt like it. It was very relaxed and sort of deliberately anti-regular.

BF I believed in those days that literature would take care of itself. *Iron* was labouring under the great liberal illusion that if you did things right then everything would take care of itself. That isn't true.

BS But the kind of anti-regularity that showed itself in *Iron* coming out whenever it felt like it or whenever it could shows up in *NMFG* being *NMFG*, No Money From the Government.

PC I think the big difference between *Iron* and *NMFG* is that *NMFG* is opening a conversation that just about anyone can get into.

BF . . . instead of acting as the arbiter of literary taste. That's the greater virtue that Lockhead has. He can say anything he has to, and all the interest that focuses on him as editor immediately dissipates because of the uncertainty about his identity. Lockhead has had some fascinating correspondence with people who probably wouldn't have talked openly with me. He's not a persona in the sense that a lot of artists and writers use personae. That's occurring all over the art scene in particular, and it's meant to elevate personality over the other elements of their work by turning identity into a work of art. It involves both an avoidance of the personal and an inflating of its formal importance. The personal isn't that interesting — even in striped pants and a top hat. The avoidances are extremely bourgeois and the pathology of it resembles that of fascism. Lockhead isn't that kind of figure because nobody has ever seen him. All he does is *meet* people. I like him because he keeps me from having to deal with all kinds of irrelevant bullshit that would prevent me from keeping my eye on what I have to do.

BS What do you mean by "Creatures of State"?

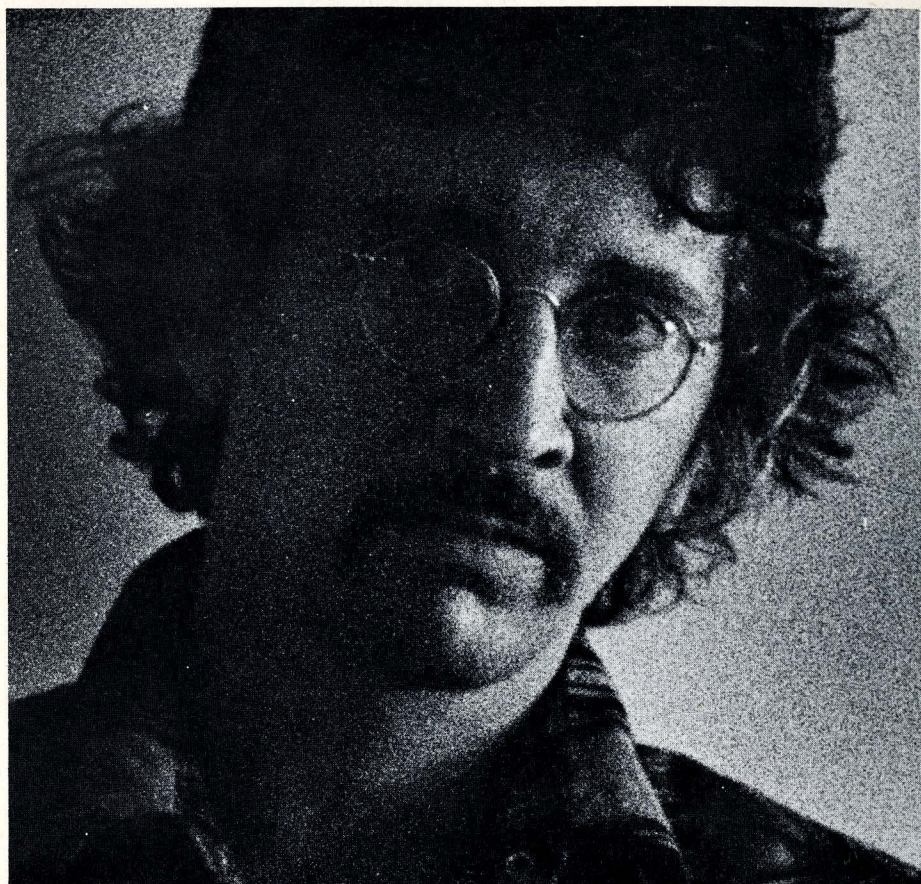
BF Well, it hangs on the word "state." Instead of defining the word "state" to an exactitude which isn't going to match up with all the kinds of understandings of it that, for instance, are around this table, I've made it into a cross-referent, a juncture. The state means the government, which we understand as a number of things all the way from the State as an instrument for providing services for human beings to something that is set up not to provide them. It does both, and it does it on a very rational basis. Then there's the state that I'm in, the state you're in, and the states of mind that individually and collectively everyone is in, which is tied irrevocably to the physical state — we're no longer creatures of ourselves, we're creatures of state.

SF Surely we're both.

BF I think we're primarily creatures of state now.

SF I think that's a lovely dialectic in the title. The "creature" proposes to me an ethos in the old sense of the word, in that it describes the lair of an animal, and the "state" describes the pseudo-ethics or ideological constructs we are in an important way subject to, or subjects of, or objectified by.

PC What interests me most about *Creatures of State*, and I think this is the difference in what you're doing, is that it's not an attempt to prove any mastery; it is not an attempt to demonstrate skill; it is not an attempt to arrive at a specific lyric instance or poem; it is not an attempt to resolve anything aesthetically. It is an attempt to go forward. Very simply, you're asking poetry to sustain the narrative and move more into the world.



BF We can close this off, if you can raise the orchestra to a crescendo. We're all exhausted, the tape is running out, the telephone is ringing. If I can use a distinction Robin Blaser gave me, I'm interested in the Prophetic possibilities of poetry, not the Visionary. I can't see into the future and besides, the joint is crawling with visionaries. I want my work to see into my own time, and I feel the necessity of seeing into one's own time, of making clear the consequences of what's been done and what is being done.

7th Serial Run

The *Substantial* is the grace, is not
materiel
nor is it *Spirit*

but rather the difficulty
of staying in an informed heart
Letting loose the hunger that is there
for substance to be informed also by
the *Otherness* of things, which likewise
is not *Materiel* nor is it
Spirit.

It asks me to ride
a black horse & a white horse,
so here I sit tall in the saddles looking hard
at the distances, hat tipped back
like Gene Autry
these *Blue Canadian Rockies*

I could sing
but the song is caked with
electronic technology & an american vision
via Billy Graham & the parasequent divisions
into binary functions, labours

losing both horses

& by which (since abt 1900) we can
sing our songs
but not in the streets
with all men & women

so that the songs we know
& those we hear
are not the issue.

For the personal
there is the search for horses

& beyond it great difficulty:
The *Substantial*, the World.
*Such that the song is heard
amongst our children.*

Noon News

reports a lone gunman on 3rd floor
4th & Fir, Vancouver
clear winters day, the air so clean
you can't taste it

The radio reports
from across the street & brought to us
by Money's Mushrooms sez the announcer
What Food These Morsels be

while the police
move to the second floor, sweating by doorways
with the barrels of highpowered rifles
pressed against to cool their necks the gunman
holds a woman on the 3rd floor
he threatens to kill, she whimpers in fear

so that I'm caught between that image
of a woman about 40, blonde hair
& Shakespeares dust rustling somewhere

Buses roll on Broadway, the News fades
& eventually all words shake loose
from the entanglement
to sharpen themselves against both time & events:

Eventually one man in critical condition, the woman
dead & the cops push the gunman into the back
of a black car & drive away

the News is brought to us
by Money's Mushrooms yeah

What Food These Mortals be

Point Grey

For Robin Mathews

Ten years looking out
at Black Mountain
& southeast Howe Sound/Burrard Inlet
rain & mist

which is what I was supposed to do
at Black Mountain — look into
what is my own.

The CP Ferry in the mist
w/ red triangle on stack
freights goods for industry —
the old confident shit abt industry carrying goods
for industry

but there is no propane on the islands
because the distributor is an ex-MLA hostile
to the socialist government & wont settle with the union

In the mist the clay banks of Point Grey pull down
from lack of silt redirected by the causeway on Iona Island
& the city govt wants to shore up the coast
with a road so the lazy can drive
away the last few humans in the city
go naked when the weather . . .

All of which ignores the question
of the governance of the elements

of Beauty &/or
the inland sewage pouring out of the Fraser
on the south side of the promontory

All of which
is mine

not as property
or even as most poets
now take the Local —
as resource
to be exploited

by which means generally the mist will remain
& the governance of language will remain
in the force of a translucence grows
more oppressive each day if

cargoless ferries ride this crest of sodden light
& our soft words carry us
& our loved ones willingly
to the other side

Silver limousines on Burrard & 4th
white heads, open-mouthed, within
turn from side to side
talking. Shades
for the bright sunlight, black suits
for the mortician, the mourners.

They must be hot in there, nothing on the street
acknowledges this death
the mourners & the dead
stopped by a light
one last intersection
of the journey to the grave. I'm going

the other way, downtown to buy a new pair of pants
& if I try to imagine a whole human life
all the things done & those
undone, I don't believe
the white heads behind the tinted glass
of silver limousines I believe

the honking horns, the limousines
glide across this intersection
to the next, the white-haired
men & women still talking
& looking out the windows

The Stone

Daily the weight of the stone grows
the difficulty of remembering
when I walk the streets I am

walking on the street, people
are starving & my car
has an oil leak. I keep thinking

its coming, *its coming*
to this, to me
at me, the weight

on my reluctant shoulders
& in this ancient story
what does he stand on, is it

the glory of the stone, the gravity
of the effort to right
a bad world.

Sparrows darken the air
love fails, women fail
as men have failed
to be just, the conditions
of our lives won't improve
unless the political & economic forms
that oppress us all

are broken, & yeah
women may lead us to it, even so

the stone is squarely on my
male shoulders, denying me pleasure
I might have to comfort me without misgivings
in this dark — lyric tensions
I know, but sparrows in the body
& the mind is winged
must lead
thru the systems of love & romance
that serve us in the absence
of a goodness we can earn & share

where the stone sits barren & silent
what our lives are
covering over
what might be

Song

What of our lives, our bodies
wasting in misery we can see
no reason for, simple despair
despite the new car parked on the street, the T.V.
on & making dinner in the kitchen.

History crowding against the Personal.
The things that break hearts
also exist in history. But the artists
have forgotten history & the politicians
have forgotten the broken & breaking
hearts. & those of us who know both
or learn that broken hearts mean nothing
unless history mends the world that breaks them
ask of our lives, our bodies wasting
in misery, more than simple despair
we can see complex reasons for

If the city is to be more than merely
a collection of loves
or attempts to love, if
it is not to go the way of most love,
mile upon mile of oily beach
for the ocean to drag into the ocean

& now I see our loves
without profit or loss
of form

our real needs
do not profit us

& the city
as we know it neither starves our bodies
nor fills our hearts

the rain
just falls when I really look
close on

November 23, 1976

How to make angels matter
to what we are lost in the midst of
put those feathery monsters to work
in a more useful job than this constant
reorganization of our narcissism. The didactic
is angelic because the black smoke & stench of diesel
is now aether
the turning of their blackened wings
must learn to clear
the snapping of tierods
under a truck
so that the flight of
& the death of
broken bodies cushioned by
broken bodies
can cease

Discourse

now in the air
& it confronts us, my fellow

Poets. What we know of common things, e.g.
how this man in his economic relations to others
creates an effect which is felt in heart & stomach
be it he is a nice man & drinks heartily, makes speeches
of good things, loves children

this discourse
is the green forest, the wilderness
to which we no longer go alone
nor with fine & frenzied eyes a'rolling.

Said simply, there are so many of us
poets & other mortals, this discourse, how
we will live on this earth among many

is common cause, is the difficulty
denying the pleasure, the now false sociality
of image, metaphor in the isolation
of the mind.

These tools are taken, misshapen
to render the condition of all most profitable
to a few

who like us drink heartily, make speeches
of good things, love children

& use our tools
better than we, breaking words on them —

Our stiff branches, the curves of body
the sun, the self

are lovely but
Beauty is the glory of the Good
& the air is ugly with words crowding us

& too many starve, we starve, this discourse

is now the air, is
our lives, my
fellow Poets

Systems of production
have been thoroughly done
Love, Sex, Death
& Economics.

People need work to live
but there is no reason for humiliating them
or for sentimentalizing it. Like sparrows

human beings are hungry.
& will remain so despite systems
of production for Love, Sex, Death
& Economics.

The sparrows outside on the grass
consume all they find
of human waste, substance & seed

My heart will break before it comes
the revolution will not come before
all of it is broken, the revolution
will break all hearts.

Let the hearts
of poets & politicians twist & break
for their poor imagination
of what we might have

let them pump into the streets
let us see what we have, this

pattern for subdivision
& progressive alienation
of public lands

despite the discourse
of all those white sheets on the clotheslines of the poor
behind Main street
whipping in the polluted breeze.

All our plans will turn red
from the gore of the Personal

& we will lift it, finally
from us

breaking our hearts

Marxist Sparrows, Angels of Fascism, Creatures
of State: The winged creatures fall
from the air, the fog is so thick today
airplanes can't even land, no one can leave
or come home.

We won't find either love or political justice
in this city if each is a sparrow
chittering in the cold.

Our lives are as blurred by the business
of looking out for ourselves as the city is
by the fog. The planes can't land
or take off despite our wonderful instruments
of pleasure. And neither can we.

Angels of Marxism, Fascist sparrows. Such divisions
bear witness to
the cold & the hunger
that divide us in the leafless tree the fog
that hides us & will bring us
inevitably to ground
in cities where angels bear arms
& the sparrows are fed at last.

May 11, 1977



THE ORGANIZER

If I try to recreate my initial meeting with the Cypress people in order to examine it & to discover the divergences from what I imagined did or should have happened, it turns into a morass; who are these people, what or who put them where they are, where do they want to go.

What are my purposes in choosing them & who am I to them. I can't answer any of those questions, so I begin with the theoretical proposition that recreation poses deeper difficulties than creation does.

Understanding the dynamics of recreation has not adequately occupied the intelligence of artists — nor that of any significant sector of our numbers that possesses the privilege of not being exclusively occupied with the problems of subsistence. The complexities are the same for an artist as for any organizer in recreating the primary reality of a given situation: how to (history, palimpsest, tape recordings) & what (the rational statements, passion, the pain in the bellies & eyes of others, & ourselves). One is looking for the answers not to play but of what is true to a common reality.

To begin any human analysis some fundamentals need to be established that satisfy the materials at hand. What do we have? What do we want? Given the absolute necessity of making a true & accurate account, how do we, I, account for the fictions & errors that naturally accrue to recreated reality when nobody but the organizer cares, & we are driven before the more pure force of events like cattle.

The material facts: Cottonwood Estates is, as someone put it, one of the better arguments around for public housing. It is a complex of some 260 apartments, blocked in some 18 to 20 semi-detached three-story walkup tenements. About 1000 people live there, 460 of them children, all of them on 7 acres. From the edges it looks like an ordinary apartment complex, but when I walk into it along a path between two of the rows of buildings and into a concrete courtyard crowded with people attempting to carry on different kinds of recreation my sense of common order quickly begins to slip. The complex, from the inside, appears infinite. The landscape consists of a series of asphalt & concrete terraces, each surrounded by buildings & each loosely designed for some form of recreation. In one courtyard two people are throwing a frisbee back & forth; another couple engages in a crude form of badminton, without a net. Some very young children play tag, and dozens of people simply mill about. To my left a group of kids play ballhockey in a pit made out of a tennis court, above which on the other side a terrace similar to the one I'm on, & across the edge of which, lined against a waisthigh galvanized iron fence perhaps twenty people watch the kids play hockey. I've lost a verb trying to describe it because there is something missing, some activity essential to its reality. All the verbs are intransitive. On the third side is one of the building blocks, & on the fourth side is an enclosed pool, & beyond that, more crowded terraces and buildings. The total effect is confusing, because the randomness of the human activity going on contradicts the rational pattern of the buildings & terraces.

Since I am here to attend a meeting, I have to find the day care centre. I don't know where it is, so I begin to wander. It is a hot summer night, the year's first, so I head in the direction of the swimming pool, not quite knowing why except that I assume children will be there. I still have no satisfactory imagination of the extent & boundary of the landscape I'm in. Nobody is in the pool, which, given the weather, is a surprise. I circle the pool, looking in, & walk into the ballhockey area, where I stop to break up a stick-swinging duel between two kids. One of them, the aggressor, is crying — another child has slashed him across the knees during the course of play, & because there are no referees and no penalties, he's caught, like most

people in similar situations, between violence & tears. I calm him, & ask where the day care centre is located. Are you a teacher, he asks, & I reply, no, just a person. It's down at the far end, you have to go back up & along there until the concrete fence & then you go down. I say, okay, thanks, & walk off, making a wrong turn which the kids correct by yelling, No, stupid, it's *that* way, brandishing their hockey sticks in the right direction.

I look up into the buildings, noticing the numbers of people in summer clothes sitting on balconies or walking from one building to the next. I'm feeling defensive, beginning to choke on the squalor, or on my fear of it. I force myself to want to see the place as it is to the Cypress people, but it is surreal, partly because they can't or won't define it (the children have no names for the places they direct me along, & partly because my sensibilities are too fragile & I transfer the actualities into symbols; asphalt, parking lots, ratmazes, jungle.

Eventually I locate the daycare centre, which is a converted ground-floor apartment with at this point about 35-40 people inside. It's shortly after 8 & the meeting is already in progress. Whereas outside, seconds before, the reality was solitary & creative & thoroughly blurred by personal conditions of perception, here it is irritable & crowded. Sterk is standing at one end of the living room waving his hands, has started the meeting in the absence of a number of the principal Cypress people, Candy Basalle in particular. He's discussing, mostly with himself, the minutes of the last meeting, which aren't here because Candy has them. I suggest that we hold up things so those who are still coming in won't miss anything — I can see that people want a little informal talk, heads are turning, eyes are focusing on the faces that most interest them. Sterk doesn't respond, altho the murmur in the room is positive to my suggestion. Sterk begins to recognize that my purposes are different from his own, & begins to eye me as one

would an enemy. For him this is an utterly different event from the one most people here are in the middle of & it's quite different from the one I'm trying to make sense of & organize. Sterk isn't aware of the people around him; he's aware that he's the centre of a dramatic event of which he is the hero & at the same time not responsible for in any way; he means well, & confidently believes that's all he or any social worker needs to determine the true reality of the event. It's about as stupid as my own more thoughtful but equally abstract conviction that all that's needed is the determination to secure reality on the basis of its material & phenomenal manifestations. Sterk's place in this event is that of an irritant, altho it may be that my irritation with him renders me incapable of recreating him properly.

So who are the people in the room? Norm Haskin from the Welfare Department is here. Les Fortin, newly elected alderman, comes in from a city council meeting. Bob Ball, the transactional analyst, wanders in, as does Jock Olson, accompanied by a woman I've seen at the university, a quite beautiful woman in her thirties with an air about her here (& in the other places I've seen her) of, what *is* it, an intruder, of existing in considerable discomfort except within her own imagination, and there . . . Look at this. My training as a bourgeois artist has lead me to focus on the atypical, the unusual, the exotic. I'm falsifying the event & the recreation of the event by my interest in this woman. Because she's the only beautiful woman in the room I'm creating a sexist & sentimental fantasy that has no relation to the event I'm trying to organize or to the difficulties people in this room are facing. The woman interests me because of the story I heard about her a few years ago; she was raped & beaten up in a university parking lot while she was acting as a decoy for a bunch of vigilantes trying to catch a rapist who had successfully raped & beaten a number of women in the same situation. She also, I recall, has a small child.

It's like being blind. What about the other people in this room, the ones to whom my skills are of use. Why not them. I come in, & I identify the outsiders, not the Cypress people. The particular coherence I'm making out of the meeting has a kind of reality that is normally adequate to narrative, deriving from the simple need to create a structure that allows for an understandable ordering of events & materials, even if the order has no relation to the particular situation

or the things in it — like building tree-houses for cattle because they need shelter. I will understand, but the understanding may be of no use to the Cypress people. I'm here as an organizer & these people want to organize themselves in order to make the conditions in which they live better than they are. I'm useful here only if I can recreate in a coherent form the true dimensions of their world for them to see & to work with — so they can change it. I'm quite useless if my recreation is obscure & personal.

But something is wrong with the meeting too. By the time the meeting is half an hour old I'm convinced that they won't be able to form an organization. The apartment managers have all been invited, the one from Cottonwood Estates is a large severe woman in her fifties & another, from a slightly smaller complex across the street. A third, a middle-aged woman who doesn't identify herself, writes down the name of everyone who speaks. My instinct is that it isn't very smart to invite the Gestapo to an anti-fascist rally, but nobody here wants to confront these three people who have real & extremely tangible power over them. Since most of the Cypress people don't even regard themselves as tenants they're supporting the illusion that the managers are their friends, leaving the managers free to identify & possibly evict those who emerge as leaders. & the Cypress people are in a way correct — they're not on the bottom. They're nowhere, & so they can't define their relationship to the usual urban hierarchy or to the class system. & so far, this meeting isn't helping. It's muddying the relationship further.

Sterk, on his own initiative, has gone to speak with the Mayor on their behalf, & has told the Mayor of the need for a park. The Mayor has responded predictably — explaining the difficulties of land acquisition, & of resetting priorities in the middle of a budget period, but allowing that he'll look into it, & will do what he can. I can't afford to appear cynical to the Cypress people, so I point out to them that getting a park won't solve all their problems, & try to get them to talk about other things that bother them. One man asks me if I can see about getting the speed limit cut to 20 mph. I've seen kids 2 years old out there on the street. & why can't we get the police to enforce the speed limits we have. Someone else tells him it's because they're out on South Road giving us tickets for making left turns onto Cypress. Everyone laughs & I explain to them that the civil service isn't set up to help citizens but to keep things the way they already are, and I go on to tell them that what civil servants do best is write memos to one another about how things should, but can't, be done. They laugh at this too, & at the police siren that has risen to a crescendo while I was speaking. Someone says, A child has just been hit out there. Oh no. About half the people rush outside. There's no accident, but on the third floor balcony of an adjoining apartment building one of the women notices a small child about to fall. There is a ring of children below watching, & a woman on the next balcony is leaning calmly on one elbow watching. At a critical moment the child's mother runs out & catches the child & takes it inside. Ooohs & aaaahs. Why can't we make the developer make those balconies safe? a woman asks. My little one fell off ours last summer, she tells no one in particular, We live on the ground floor but she still got a fractured skull & one of these days someone's going to get killed. The manageress pumps her arm & bites her lip, but before she can answer a middleaged woman — a tenant — answers for her. It's not the developer who's at fault, its these parents. They just don't care. I think: people have to have a reason for caring & they have to know how to care. If the caring they have is largely incompetent, whose fault is it? How do they get here in the first place, where nobody in his right mind would live if they had the choice. But these people *do* have a choice, or is it they have an infinite number of identical choices. Later on I will tell Moira we *are* middleclass & our lives have been incredibly sheltered, & I don't know what protects us from falling into this condition of living. Taste? How does one acquire *Taste*. & is that the only choice & protection available

to an ordinary citizen. I used to think that everything would be solved if everyone had taste. But the truth is not so easy. Given my particular taste none of these people would live here. Where would they live? They would live where I do. & where would I live?

I keep on trying to get the Cypress people to talk about the things they see around them that bother them, careful not to speak of them, as problems. One woman wants those damned longhaired teenagers to wear proper bathing attire. They leave their filth in the pool she's never swum in. Get Management to regulate such things. But Management explains as always how difficult it is, how it takes time. A number of people want higher speedbumps, without the drainage openings thru which motorcycles can go without reducing speed. Management will look into such things, but everything they do will get back to the tenants, higher costs mean higher rents, or higher taxes for the taxpayer. Management will look into the costs & let you know. *When will that be?* It takes time, it took two months to get the bumps in in the first place. *When?* someone insists, *When?* We'll let you know. *When?* When we get our facts together. Someone in the back of the room says, quietly, but loud enough for everyone to hear: *Bullshit.*

The meeting breaks for coffee, with the promise from Sterk that after the break a new chairman will be elected, someone, I'm quick to point out, from within the complex. The evening is cooling off, but it's incredibly hot inside & so I go outside & walk along the side of the

building. The complex is only a few years old but it's already falling apart. Doors are scraped, concrete is cracked, plaster is falling. I try to imagine the place twenty years from now but that's impossible, the social imagination that created this place has replaced the concept of the future with one of profit. This place can't grow old because nothing but the people in it are alive; there is no grass, no trees to fill out. Nothing will age, it will only break down or just break. There is a kind of bacchanalia going on, but there won't be any growth of grapes or overgrowth of ivy. There's only extension, creation, development, more profits. When I go inside again coffee & donuts are being served, & someone has brought some foullooking brownies. I try one, & it tastes as bad as it looks, made, I think, with margarine. I begin the discussion by suggesting that they elect an executive & that they send around a sheet for everyone to sign as members. Ross Hughes is elected chairman, Al Robles is Vicepresident Candy Basalle secretary & Tina Sordo treasurer. Then they appoint a recreation delegation to approach the schoolboard for free gym time at a nearby school. Another delegation is appointed to approach city council for speedlimit protection. Norm Haskin & Les Fortin will help. Ross Hughes is caught up in the ecstasy of democracy & seems to think that they can solve everything by voting on it. They vote at least six times, finally to meeting May 28th at 8:00 P.M. same place. They're the Cypress Neighbourhood Improvement Association and some of them look pleased, others look a little frightened, & others look around themselves with a sense of their own importance & that of the group. They're better off than they were, & I go home.



POETRY AND THE 70's

Someone pointed out to me the other day that all those handsome and/or beautiful liberal poets who spent the 1960's so comfortably inflating their senses into a cosmology were now spending most of their time apologizing for their apoliticality. One remark that struck me during the conversation was to the effect that the self-consciousness of liberal poets was becoming obscure and perverse because the area of human understanding they are exploring is itself becoming obscure and perverse. But this is the 1970's and while the 1960's taught most of us that politics was at least there to observe, there is now no avoiding that understanding of reality. Except, apparently, thru Art. Artists in this country, and poets in particular, seem to make a virtue out of ignoring political reality. The more difficult, as a poet, I find it to avoid politics, the more difficult I find it to accept Poetry and poets as we now practice that activity and role. I find I have about three fundamental objections to what is written, and to the way poets act in the world.

The first objection begins in a criticism Charles Olson once made of Robert Duncan — Chaos is too easy. By that Olson wasn't proposing that the universe is ordered willy-nilly. He was saying that Duncan's concern with personal orders, along with the underlying assumption that if personal order is precise (from Pound) everything else will take care of itself, begets merely personal style and signature. Such an attitude on Duncan's part also tacitly encourages the disorder and dispersal that characterizes present human existence, and an antisocial or at least asocial phenomenology which proceeds more or less directly from the ego. What gets created, in less gifted poets than Duncan, is a personal style composed of defensive ethical tricks (wisdoms) that substitute for what poets should have — a stance that accounts for the elements of existence outside the singularity and signature of personal imagination.

Most of the books of poetry I see these days are *collections* of such wisdoms, and I mean first of all that they are *not books*, they have no demanding structural purpose, and usually consist of a string of negations connected only by the vagaries of egotistical experience. In short, they're kind of boring and inscrutable. If they're interesting, it's because the attitude toward the world that they display involves a romantic attraction to those areas of existence in which questions of social responsibility have been done away with. They titillate, but there is really very little to excuse them, except to point out, as English teachers are fond of doing, the quite exquisite skill in the construction of the verse, which is something about as rare these days as small collections of verse by Canadian poets.

Nor will anyone mumbling the aged term *Surrealism* make adequate excuse. Psychic automatism at this point in history is little more than buzz for the lazy and/or opportunistic both inside & outside Art.

The second objection I have, or rather the third because the second is to Surrealism, is to the passive socio-cultural role poets have accepted for themselves and for poetry in the last 150 years. Mainstream artists in general and English poets in particular in the 19th Century became so convinced of the centrality of the nonsense connected with writing poetry that they wrote and lived with increasingly little awareness of the difference between their eye-rolling poetic nonsense and the serious historical role poets have played in human society. Because they didn't pay attention to their real work, they became, with notable exceptions, clowns whose entertainment for others lay in the pompous privilege they made out of the internal machinations of The Poet. They insisted, almost to the man, on the divine madness of poets, often to the exclusion of the other attentions poets have brought to their work, preferring to believe and act as if the primacy of private imagination will bring us suddenly and collectively into Utopia.

So unwarranted & self-congratulatory a pronouncement was naturally taken as gospel by most of the lazy assholes who followed, and the power structures of the 19th and 20th centuries have naturally granted this divine madness because it places the job of determining the Real completely in their hands for the first time in human history.

Art, and Poetry in particular, can never be passive in reflecting its

time or culture. To do so today is to reflect a fragmentary, half-ignorant panoply in which, looming in the foreground, is the Self-grinning larcenously. Behind it are the streets, nature dimly visible in the distance. Others, or in philosophical terms, the Other, appears, if at all, in the form of partialities, possessions, sexual capacities, or by auras and spiritualities; never in wholeness, always disconnected from the Self. Underpinning this landscape is privilege and exploitation, which is goal and method.

The artists of my own generation can and should be accused of a lack of social imagination; they can imagine no other world than the one they live in, and worse, many regard the absence as a virtue. Such a condition can be explained as demoralization, and presupposes the need for a moralization. But while most artists are aware of the demoralization it is precisely the lack of social imagination that prevents them from really grappling with the problem of how to create social morale within a generation of individualists. Similarly, its absence deprives us of perspective, and leaves us all in the position of excusing our own time on the basis of what it does do, much like those people who reasoned that the recent U.N. Habitat conference in Vancouver was a good thing because some positive things happened to people who attended. This amounts to the same thing as saying that MacDonald Drive-ins are a positive social force because the french fries are tasty. An amazing number of intelligent people took that attitude about Habitat despite knowing that the real problems of the world's poor never have been and never will be solved in the Hotel Ballrooms of the highly industrialized and rich countries. Those problems are social and political in both nature and remedy, not professional and technical.

If I were to suggest that the problems of Art are the same, the entire establishment in Poetry would miraculously be joined by the Avant Garde in bellowing words like *totalitarian* and *Liberty of Imagination* as they collectively slither back into their frothy liberal privacy. I'd probably get the same response if I tried to say that to a Rotary Club luncheon, but there the reaction would at least be based on self-interest.

Unless poets *are* rich professionals and/or technocrats, it isn't in their interest or in the interest of Poetry to remain diffident to social and political ideas. A like difference of the vast majority of people has been the source or the tyranny that manipulates our individualism for economic and political purposes in just about every aspect of our lives. Canadian poets like Al Purdy, Leonard Cohen and Earle Birney, and a depressing majority of my own contemporaries, are really functioning as a kind of lunatic fringe of the Chamber of Commerce. Their ethic, if not their practice and their goals, is the same.

The purpose of having poets as a lunatic fringe is easy enough to figure out. Its existence demonstrates that the system is continuing to function properly and that the outrageous primacy of individual expression, be it poetry or profit-taking, is useful and necessary to all — from the Rotary Club to Artie Gold. The sneer each has for the other really doesn't matter so long as they continue to agree on the basic system of operation.

The proposal is a modest one, to say the least. We have, as artists, no say because we have had so little to say about anything larger than personal feelings that the world has stopped listening. There are more important and maybe even beautiful things to say than how these leafless trees are tied to our heartstrings. Corporate profits continue to grow, people are starved for words that mean something even if all of our bellies are full, and the poor are as poor as they ever were.



Stan Persky / ADDRESS TO THE WORKERS' COUNCIL OF PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.

Brian Fawcett, *Creatures of State* (Talonbooks, Vancouver, 1977)

In case you've forgotten what the preoccupations of contemporary poetry are, here is a sampler of the mercilessly bad:

Some leaves stay
long after the trees
shave off their beards and

give the Cold their
gray contempt to
walk on. But these

single, small flutterers
hang way past dinner,
aloof to the weather. . . .

(from "Last Leaves of Fall", M.K.)

(For those itching to know whodunit, the above missive flutters to the conclusion: "yet there's a/lesson here; a kind of/sacred/singleness of will.")

Against my feet the force
Of the apple tree
Comes up hard.

It is the arm of earth's lovely shove
 and down
Around me leaves like little souls
 unfinished autumn
Business rusting on top of the grass.

(from "Autumnal", W.J.S.)

(The effect of this incessant natural force on the author eventually “makes me dizzy makes/Me hard & unique like breech birth.” No, not beech, breech.) And finally:

.....

Burn off, as sunlight burns
Through morning fog, this gauze
Round my protected heart,
And let your fire
Reanimate my cold clay.

(from "Heirloom", E.H.)

(As you probably guessed, it's addressed to God.)

The above semi-anonymous chrestomathy, unlike John Newlove's *Canadian Poetry: The Modern Era* (M&S, 1977), which is "based on a survey done of the needs of Canadian literature instructors in small universities across the country", was selected with brutal arbitrariness from the pages of *Canadian Forum* (Oct. 77). I admit to deliberately avoiding good poems, not to make the race easier for my horse, but to minimize distraction. Despite being unfairly torn from their placid natural habitat, such poems express not unrepresentative concerns.

(Though I'm sorry for being unfair, at least I didn't make you suffer any "love" poems.) The present range, then, is sufficient for observations that provide commentary upon "life" (though who is to know that that "single, small flutterer" illustrating "singleness of will" doesn't refer to Hitler?), the true and false modesty of finding oneself in the cosmos (without the anxiety of airplanes hijacked by Japanese Red Army Terrorists), invocations to spiritual beings (although God is perhaps old-fashioned, petulant pleas to the Muse are not uncommon; personally, I prefer praying to old unrequited loves, who respond to your entreaties with about the same degree of efficacy as other divinities and have the added advantage of providing a pleasant image satisfying to nocturnal fantasy). I leave aside copious quantities of mere vicious obscurantism. I say nothing of love. I admit there is poetry unashamed of mundane institutions (airports, tv, hockey), though too often blankly present in affirmation of the existential moment.

The number of poetry books published in Canada this year which give no hint whatsoever that we are in the midst of a capitalist crisis is truly astonishing. I don't mean topicality (though, at times, I'm sorely tempted to begin: "This is a poem about layoffs at Inco/it doesn't concern me/after all, I'm not losing *my* job"). I simply mean what Fawcett means when he thunders:

Art, and Poetry in particular, can never be passive in reflecting its time or culture. To do so today is to reflect a fragmentary, half-ignorant panoply in which, looming in the foreground, is the Self — grinning larcenously. Behind it are the streets, nature dimly visible in the distance. Others . . . appear, if at all, in the form of partialities, possessions, sexual capacities, or by auras and spiritualities; never in wholeness, always disconnected from the Self. Underpinning this landscape is privilege and exploitation.

In case you've forgotten the possibilities of contemporary poetry,
take this, "Elegy", from *Creatures of State*, by contrast (settle in, the
Styx is wide, and our centaur-boatman is accustomed to shiftwork) :

We feel alone we
don't want to own any of it.

It isn't that words fail me
or that ancient motions of the moon & stars
cease to delight but

....

The orchard is private property,
is fenced against campertrucks

....

most trees dead & they want
to cut them all down
to keep spraying costs in line
for the managed orchards to the north
& all I am asked is

does the Old Moon Abide, is it full
of loathing?

....

the farmers still work, they sell peaches
in styrofoam cartons to the tourists
& space in the orchards for campers

....

the heavenly bodies . . .

spread their designs
over the surface of the lake the wind
comes up, pushes the new weed

onto the subdivided shore, but

we must also know & say that
capitalism succeeded on this continent
because of the possibility of expanding
into contiguous markets & landscapes

& we have come to the end here
in the particular instances
Penticton, Princeton, Prince George

....

& the contraction
in the value of our capital (& our Eros
reveals the interior destructions

....

What occurs here is the ultimate sorrow
of mere development, is consumption
without accretion
of thought

 inattention to material —
arborite & plywood & these
ornamental cedars are like our lives
they lack virtu they simply
tire out with age & turn to junk, have
to be discarded. . . .

The theoretical perspective — that is, the shift from bourgeois idealism to historical materialism — so imbues the content that it might go virtually unnoticed, even in this *Reader's Digest* condensed version. Its effect, as they say about relativity theory in relation to Newton, is not to discard, but to encompass and surpass. Thus, for instance, “most trees dead & they want/to cut them all down” is there just like it would be in any poem, however, not as implicit condemnation of man’s inhumanity to nature, but in relation to spraying cost, which in turn concerns the economic rhythm of the entire industry. That is, you continue to see the orchards, actual trees, but simultaneously also apprehend the abstraction of the fruit industry (in sum, a more complex reality). Gradually, there is accretion: “. . . the wind/comes

up, pushes the new weed/onto the subdivided shore . . .” (he doesn’t succumb to the topical, discoursing on the infestation of Eurasian milfoil weed), as the orchard is private property, the shore is subdivided (the weed, presumably, democratically fouls everyone’s beachfront). The texture is such that by the time we are in need of an explicit lexicon (“capitalism” “contiguous markets”, “contraction/in the value of our capital (& our Eros”, where Eros is measured in these new terms), nothing is out of place (I leave aside the poem’s Beauty, Intelligence and the fact that it makes you go boo-hoo in the night).

In one poem in *Creatures of State* that serves as a kind of prologue to the unrelenting address of Citizen Fawcett (b. 1944, Prince George, B.C.) to his fellow citizens, he’s driving north, returning, into the central interior:

the road stretching into the starless dark etc.
eventually the lights of the city, Prince George

That rather startling “etc.” refers not just to everything that we’re familiar with about such trips, including the road’s duration, but also to an entire mode of poetry (unwittingly, it also bespeaks an enormous confidence of poetic craft which, happily, is justified by the text). “Etc.”: and the rest of what can be safely assumed we all know.

Creatures of State, confidence notwithstanding, is enmeshed in the struggle for a vocabulary (both lexical and conceptual) in poetry beyond what can be safely assumed we all know. This enlargement of language that allows poetry to directly take account of/confront/write itself in terms of capitalist society (invisible in most of our poetry) proposes (even insists upon) a “public imagination” that shakes us free from the “egocentric perspective of lyric poetry” and attempts to avoid the “closure of ideology” (what we think of, derogatorily, as political rhetoric). As such, it breaks with Fawcett’s earlier work, and more importantly, challenges most of what is currently going on in Canadian poetry (and by that, I refer to something more substantial than Newlove’s computer-like compilations or the *Forum*’s verse-filler).

Fawcett has vigorously argued our plight from the podium of *No Money From the Government* (it says something of that plight that *NMFG*, the poetry magazine Fawcett has produced since early 1976, is one of less than a handful of such publications that can be taken at all seriously) :

The artists of my own generation can and should be accused of a lack of social imagination; they can imagine no other world than the one they live in, and worse, many regard the absence as a virtue. Such a condition can be explained as demoralization, and presupposes the need for a moralization. But while most artists are aware of the demoralization it is precisely the lack of social imagination that prevents them from really grappling with the problem of how to create social morale within a generation of individualists. Similarly, its absence deprives us of perspective, and leaves us all in the position of excusing our own time. . . .

He's unsparing of the "fundamentally hostile, paranoid and depressing" writers whose "attitude toward the world outside themselves involves a romantic attraction to those areas of existence in which questions of social responsibility have been done away with." "There is really very little to excuse it." He's equally impatient with capitalism's apologists: "This amounts . . . to saying that MacDonald's Drive-ins are a positive social force because the french fries are tasty." Briefly, the problems of the world's oppressed "are social and political in both nature and remedy, not professional and technical." Which sets the stage for the final blasphemy:

If I were to suggest that the problems of poetry are the same, the entire establishment in poetry would miraculously be joined by the avant garde in bellowing words like *totalitarian* and *Liberty of Imagination* as they collectively slither back into their frothy liberal privacy.

(Well, he's still in the teething stage, and anyway, you've probably been urged to "have a nice day" several times already today.)

Although *Creatures of State* isn't nostalgic, Fawcett surfaces in Prince George with some frequency. Our mutual experiences of homecoming are familiar enough. Andrew Suknaski's *Wood Mountain Poems* (Macmillan, 1976) or George Bowering's "Autobiology" in *The Catch* (M&S, 1976) come to mind, with the crucial difference that Prince George is a major regional sub-metropolis at the heart of a provincial economy organized around capitalist exploitation of renewable resources (in this case, lumber) destined for the imperialist market.

In that sense, it is easier to come home to the homesteader and aboriginal ghosts of Wood Mountain, Sask., or the dying orchards, long-abandoned smelter stacks and slag heap of Greenwood, B.C., especially if there isn't any intention to link these birthplaces to anything more specific than "the modern world" (in a general sense).

In Prince George, Fawcett finds not ghosts but doppelgangers, doubles of himself at the initiatory age of adolescence, and their appearance is all the more chilling in that they aren't the least bit mysterious; rather, these attitudes, aspirations, assumed manly trappings that constitute personality are seen to be systematically reproduced by capitalist relations of production (that is, how human beings relate to each other given how things are produced, the legend of the frontier, general horniness, etc.).

In Suknaski and Bowering, the poetic problem is entrance, invocation, making the ghosts or childhood consciousness speak, and what linkages there are (between past and present modes of production) have the simple function of making the loss (or rediscovery) more poignant. Fawcett, on the other hand, gets into Prince George easily enough; the trick is getting out alive. (By the way, I cite Suknaski and this chunk of Bowering without pejorative intention, but as the measure of what's readable.)

In Fawcett, there is as much specificity ("... one 1957 International 180 refrigerator truck painted cream & white w/ Roses Ice Cream, lettered big on the sides & across the front same & on each door Prince George, B.C./took the south approach to the Cottonwood Bridge 18 miles north of Quesnel took it too fast...") as Suknaski ("*father*/ arrives in moose jaw fall of 1914/to find the landtitles office"), but rather than locating one's roots, Fawcett seeks root-causes of our present condition.

In "Cottonwood Canyon" (which Fawcett, a son angry at the city fathers, imagines addressed to the Chamber of Commerce, but which will more likely be remembered by the workers' council of the coming socialist era), the initiatory rite is to determine "whether or not it is possible to take the south approach to the Cottonwood bridge at 60 mph & so make it up the north side of the river canyon without having to gear down all the way/impossible physically but necessary because men talked in the alley behind the plant & shrugged shoulders in such a way as to dispell experience & doubt". The whole point being: "to be among these men". The paradox, of course, seen from the point of return, is that the culture (of men) he ardently desired initiation into isn't, finally, worth being initiated into. Like every culture's deception, the milieu in which the initiatory rite was meaningful had been presented to him as the whole world, i.e., the entirety of meaning. Little wonder that he awakens in a strange place crying that "we are starved for meaning". Which leaves the men. (Cf. the proceedings of the conference on Women and Economic Development, held in Prince

George, Nov. 77, for the other side of this loneliness.) The now-understood (at least better than before) social reality drives the poem to sorrow over those men who were, in a sense, cheated out of a culture worth having. The forces were beyond their undersanding, and hence, their control:

Prince George is the manifestation of the collective dream of its citizens

a dream of wealth, progress, sophisticated industry pouring goods to world markets

the dream of a generation of men during the 1960's at the beginning of old age,

who came to the city in the 30's & 40's to escape the hungers of the big cities & came with a fierceness to work & make money

women to raise children

my mother at age 35 walking downtown along wooden sidewalks in a white dress . . .

These men grew old rushing at the shimmer of dollars

shafting their friends

some of them hatchetmen for Netherlands Overseas or Northwood Pulp & Paper overbidding timber licences to knock off small mills

They dreamed at night of paper money

in banks made of plywood

& they believed it was just & progressive when the pulp mills came to push them out

The work on Prince George, it's safe to say, isn't done. (Cf. Charles Olson vis-a-vis some other town.) Fawcett's but recently acquired the tools that allow him to plumb, for instance, the Sloan Reports, which at the conclusion of World War II, provided the ideological rationale for monopoly capitalism in logging that gave birth (I don't mean the founding) to Prince George.

Apart from inconsistencies, backsliding and trial balloons that turn out to be leaden, the latter half of *Creatures of State* suffers one major technical fault: what now are grouped as sets of poems interspersed by the repetition of a not particularly enthralling cover illustration were (as originally printed in *NMFG*) titled "serial runs" (e.g., "1st Serial Run: Love's Argument") in which the poems ran continuously over the pages separated only by typographical stars rather than being given the misplaced importance of being set one to a page. (Given the present inattention, I suppose only a stickler for poetry will notice.)

Finally: as noted previously, the call (to arms) is for poetry that is active in reflecting its time or culture, rather than topicality. Yet there are topics broad enough to be common culture. Fawcett, writing in the terms of a discourse which is international, thus putting us in touch with everyone (except dying social classes), at least has some advantage in hailing "The Fall of Saigon" (naturally, our cautious former redneck, raised in the Cold War, would not call it "The Liberation of Saigon"). It is nonetheless difficult, because you have to end up with a real Nixon, which, paradoxically, is not *the* real Nixon, but one that must be as enduring as Dante's Pier della Vigna.

Like hell,
America is collapsing, it is simply being defeated
without intelligent understanding of the causes,
ferrying its finks & victims in barges. . . .
while that
nation divests itself of the image of defeat
Nixon hobbles along pacific coast beaches
on legs bloated with disease

. . . .

Nixon
looks out from the heart of America
we are all subject to . . .
& in Saigon
soldiers sleep in the doorways of paradise
& the stench of gunpowder & gasoline
surrenders in the streets
& our own streets
clear for a moment
hold a possibility of more
than the possession
of stolen blossoms

Let's hope so. As the delegate from Kitimat told the (aforementioned) women's conference: "We have an obligation, if only for our children, to look at the capitalist system, and to call a spade a spade."



Tim Porter / PHOTOGRAPHS

The problem was that you didn't always know what you were seeing until later, maybe years later, that a lot of it never made it in at all, it just stayed stored there in your eyes.

— MICHAEL HERR, *Dispatches* (Knopf)



For the past six months, Tim Porter has been active photographing two seemingly disparate subjects: *The Nitobe Gardens*, and *Isy's Theatre Cabaret*.

The Japanese gardens (2.2 acres) was made at UBC in 1960 by a distinguished group of Japanese landscape architects directed by Kannosuke Mori. The careful placement of trees, shrubs and stone arrangements gives an oriental focus to our scenery, and seventeen years of weathering and growth have enhanced that focus.

Isy's is a focus of another kind. It opened in 1957 as one of Vancouver's finest entertainment spots, part of an international circuit of nightclubs. By 1971 these clubs had collapsed under the weight of television, and today *Isy's* is a strip city — a reminder of the past glamour of metropolitan nightlife.

At first, Porter's interests appear arbitrary. Closer examination reveals that there is a thematic unity, which appears to have emerged intuitively rather than from deliberation. *The Nitobe Gardens* is a microcosm: nature moulded through the mind. Similarly the vicarious sexual innuendo of *Isy's Cabaret* reflects the suppressed sexuality of our society.

Porter does not restrict himself to representation, but interprets the subject matter through his photographic vision. He spent months familiarizing himself *in situ*, allowing each of the images to emerge and distill.

As he came to know the people and stories of the club, the camera became part of the dancer's performance, with photographs taken as fast as the tempo and the ambience. Yet Porter remains ironically aware of Vancouver's second-rate approximation of the energy and excitement of Las Vegas nightlife. He recognizes the dreams and the aspirations, and his presence serves to partially recreate some of the glamour of a first-class Vegas revue.

His interest in the Japanese garden may seem more obscure. Foremost it derives from Japan itself, where visual aesthetics are advanced, especially regarding the contemporary notion of the photographic essay, which develops a personal visual syntax through editing. Porter respects the important Japanese photographers, who publish their photographic projects extensively in journals rather than being concerned with the photograph as an art object. And there is also the Japanese vision of nature which is so at odds with our own chaotically organic West Coast rain forests. Man's hand on nature is ever present and that degree of control and artifice has been a central theme in Japanese photography.

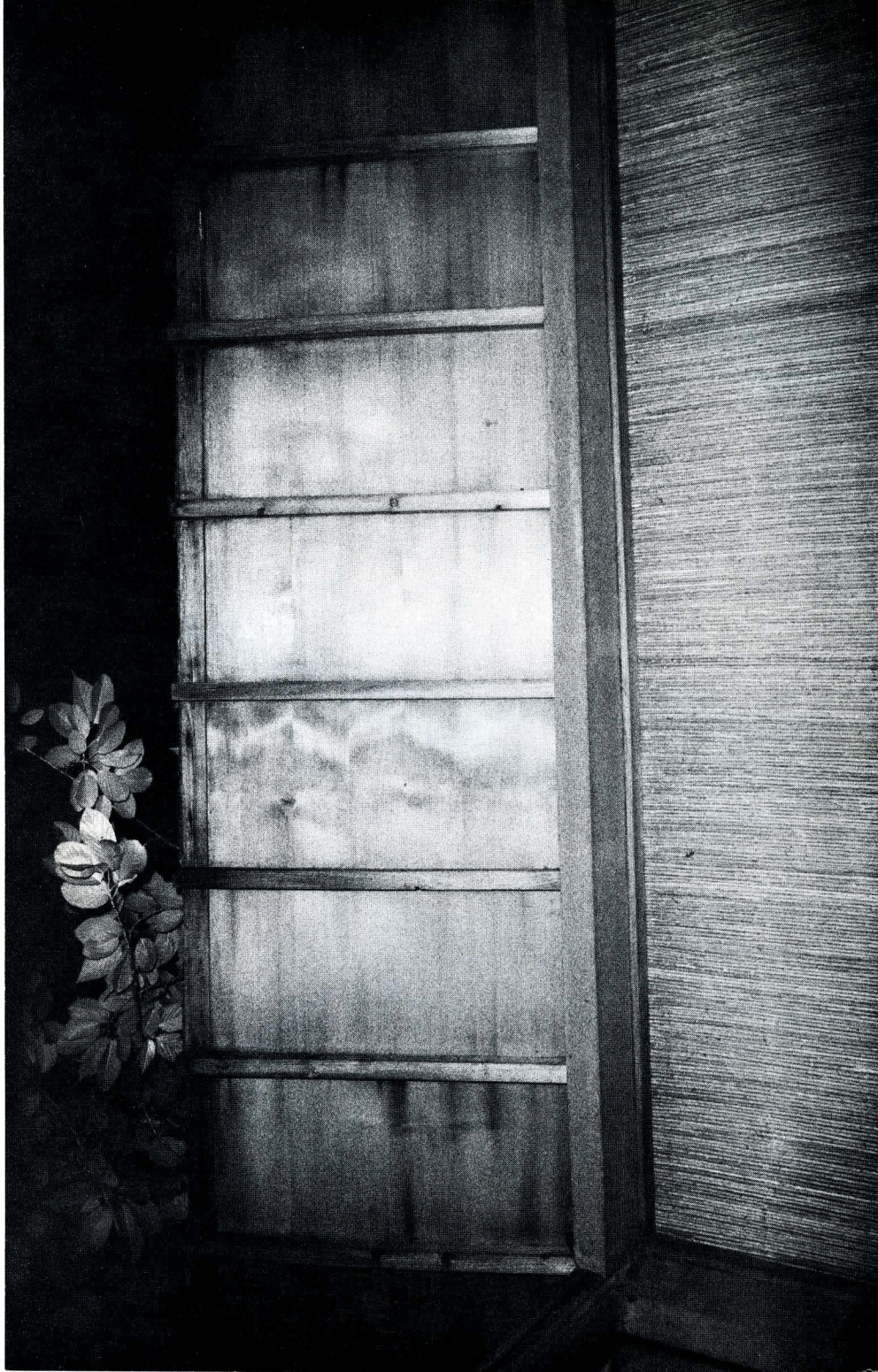
Just as human control in the Japanese garden hints at repression and subverted violence, the innuendo of movements and gestures of the strippers similarly illustrates the repressed and subverted sexuality in our own society. The vicarious, voyeuristic pleasure one gets from watching the strippers ultimately remains unfulfilled, and distinctly at odds with the real feelings of the strippers.

These photographs offer an alternative to the voyeuristic experience or the environment of the gardens. We are detached from the image and its content, and Porter makes strong demands on his viewers. He has sacrificed photographic conventions and techniques, for the sake of the final effect. The camera is jimmied, lights are moved and focus is changed during the exposure, with results that are luminous, lyrical, evocative. Although each photograph retains an initial feeling of familiarity, the juxtaposition of the images creates a new visual syntax which transcends the subject matter.

— DAVID MAC WILLIAM





















Duncan McNaughton / FIVE POEMS

OLD SPRING

(Cernuda)

Now, in the violet west of the afternoon,
The magnolias in flower already wet with dew,
To pass these streets, while the moon
Grows through the air, will be to dream awake.

Flocks of swallows will make the sky more vast
With their lament; the water in a fountain
Will liberate, purely, the deep voice of the earth;
Then the sky *and* the earth will fall silent.

In the corner of some enclosure / cloister?, alone
With your forehead in your hand, as a phantom
That returns, you would weep thinking
How lovely was life and how useless.

(*Bandos de golondrinas*)

SWOLLEN NIGHT

This culture — absurd!
a man needs a naked dissecting eye
a man must have at least one sharp knife
big enough to kill that vicious opaque monster
who lurches across the street with murder in his eyes
that american, who detests himself for accepting polyester suits
of industrial colors, who aspires to Andrew Mellon's desk
it's all the same now as then, a man's mouth closes on his
fried fish but he may as well be eating a woman indifferently
while she spouts corrupt humanism, it was a bad idea to begin with
anything to preserve the past, a man needs to be filled with the rush
of the night's
wind, filled as a sack is filled, a bag of a man filled up with the hushed
expanse of the wind and filled with the fat full moon moving low
behind
the screen of tall black trees, the *moon* gliding in the *sky of night*,
a man needs
the elements other than himself desperately, the inhuman monstrosities
of nature which his soul adores and his imagination flies out to

WELCOME PLESIOSAURUS

for Colin Stuart

Mayhap descry the lineaments of revenge upon
God's smiling countenance? Welcome,
if that's what you were, ô manifesting angel
to japanese sailors
welcome back to the empire
of the senses —

but you never left! O mighty 4-flippered seagoing lizard,

ô actual monster, muscular portent & affronter of good, Jurassic
ocean-haunter of New Zealand, well-acquainted with gulls
and astounding!

when men will save men all threatened creatures will no longer
conceal their prophetic Texaneity,
their Harley wings

ô mezazoon,

myth-lord of my reptilic brain,
what rippled your main vein while you cruised the wavy deep?
checking out the main line, ô retard, of all our cosmology . . .

LUNCHEON

That's good! Whalen said,
turning over on the air

another's phrase — clear ideolection.

They blow, the winds of May
tonight, the trees move heavy dances
incredible, like, alohas
(cyprus shudders, beckoning pines)

Who is it?

ought to *what*?

all this drama, no

I'll get the fire going,

all this drama

You're the only woman in my life, I know whoever you are

the bugs are insidious & have unpleasant silver undersides,
which live behind the days of the year;

meanwhile,

Berkson recalls O'Hara,

gnats in the white wine,

while serving dry vermouth with ice cubes

& dead insects

who resemble miniature yellow jackets

pickled, curled over, floating

RIGHT ON

Right on. subdued applause, whistles

for Camel, hip cerebral Brit.
fusion group electric europ
licks you
people are going to fly

it's about time if they
make an airplane
do it which isn't even alive . . .

don't look at me I don't know
what way to turn, we proved
we're seminal
emissions it was very weakening
yawn, and now we're depressed by it

the whole world's depressed, eh?
fuck the whole world the corrupt
bad magic trip Artaud's right

on Antonin.

Harvey Chometsky / LIVING ROOM

an important message on survival

123

We need not seek perfection. We must retain the atmosphere we desire. We are all framework of system, & bang, & bang your head against as hard as they come structure, & remain voiceless. Do Not Seek Perfection.

It is conceived by The Structure and thus impossible for independent mutants.

Scar yourself as much as possible, & still carry a portable smile.

Abuse yourself.

Display your wounds & decay as alternatives.

Smell human even though it smells like shit.

Even bears wont eat man-meat.

Is this message clear?

102

But there are ways.

Listen to instructions & turn the volume up.
A friend did & lived to love the prophetic
3-pack throat that views idiocy in suburban conglomerate
human, with their dull gray clay souvenirs & plastic
lawn chairs.

The scotch stained throat laughs.

The Throat laughs.

Laughs & carries his body
through the throngs,
past the seer-sucker scurriers & antiseptic smelling
so limbo limbs.

It doesnt *cost* to be entertained,

the price is right.

The Throat loves & hates.
This is unforecastable, & so inexcusable.

Hear the straining sax-notes of The Man who died too young
of putting too many notes in *all the time!*

DONT CARRY THE SAME BEAT *ALL THE TIME!*

To variate is difficult & often fatal,
the danger promotes you.

There are others.
Travelling through the herds,
see them shining high among the bobbing, nodding, skulls.
Let the world rotate around you; have built in jazz & use
your eyes as movie screens.

Be entertained, there is enough laughter,
& odd.

ABOVE ALL,
NEVER THINK OF YOUR FILE.

This makes you framework material, & you already live
in a revolving vacuum, so how can you be material?

The material is moving to the cities, & no more the gentle,
honest men with their beautiful manner.

They are all turning into men called Ezra,
& write all the rules.

Is it like that?

There are flights.

Flying carries no scandal,
attempt it.

The view is much better from way
up here,

The air much cleaner,

the sound

pure.

Barry McKinnon / *The the.*

(for Pat Lane & Wallace Stevens)

terror in the mind. of this &
less we speak

inverted trees & the task
of poetry:

Beatrice / Helen disappear & the future, a vast
expanse of snow, cutbanks perhaps to stop
the view, the eye to take the shape of all

contours. interruptions that are themselves
a kind of death,

these questions that break our solitude.

*

what is work, but this — to know, to last
human pressure, to continue

a spin (not a dance, which is
the farthest pole of what I speak)

*

I saw myself on skis — the poem began
months ago — a line of blue where snow
breaks

from one part of the city, you'd swear
civilization has ended, & that here
we stand

amidst invisible wires, primeval —
very old & our life but an outward breath,

a long continuance of The

the.

today:

in this cold, the body moves hot. it knows
what to do. (no doubt, this part of the brain
is almost perfect with its control, as the part
which keeps balance
for the crazed

*

you must be more careful. my block
heater is missing: the car may not start, I
may not get to where I have to to — or else
accept the delays,

to speculate: not much is too important, or
worth getting to —

(*a vision of inverted*

trees

got me here

*

this delay in language — not ever to want
getting out

the *real* is different: strippers in The Canada
are ugly & bruised — better than most poetry — but not
beautiful

if you look close

(the reeling flesh speculations
robbed with each
part removed

outside:

20 min. later a boy who was sober, now
reels out the door into 20 below weather, dressed in
levis vest, T shirt, cannot walk, as I walk
off

home, in this life

it is so easy

to curl in snow, dream of Gauguin's

trees

(if you cant find a car
to steal

or

The the.

what is known, what is not
known

— an intense educational campaign
should be launched —

there is no end to meanness & misunderstanding

the impossible inverted trees

(did the boy make it

a simple flash thru
the mind, to launch a search
so fast to forget what was
sought

to say what? if we had the comfort of a real & breaking
heart,

yet enough to watch children
grow

in our impossible silence not knowing
what to say

*

god bless you

*

if we could admit: the lines are really down, the long
and lasting cedar has a point in
the wind a breaking point, its
roots sucked out
the earth

dec/77

David Phillips / WILD ROSES

wild roses

this time

the intelligent heart's
fragrance

renders me helpless

when i can't see you
my heart breaks

your ways have wound themselves
into my ways

 winding themselves into
you

 that's how i know
or see you

the name of the process is
unknown now

 love
once covered the romance
of first seeing

 more than the others
allowed

 or that possible
& killed
each other preventing

when i can't see you i feel dangerous
with the loss

 you give me more
peace & pleasure
than i'll ever

 remember

intense memory of
place you
 made aware here, the air
breathed unlike
 any other

a face
eyes & the rest

forms between
seeing you

nothing stirs
& i almost vanish
 into your sight

so i speak
try thinking across years
to where you sit
unknown
 in the late night
at the end of love

 its realm
the real energy of
our appearance
 almost forming
the ones we are

love calls
licks a flame out of me

lights up the line
the voice enters thru

transforming
the pure receiver this heart
becomes hearing it

time opens

the soul's heart

the soul grows
eyes

an entire body is born
into its service

as any form
its appearance includes
the true voice

reaching past
the person to awaken the source of
its seeking

i die when i see you

because you don't see me, you see

yourself dying
in your arms, myself

i only really see you when my eyes
close tight & its night
time

our arms & legs
wrapped around

i die to get past
myself in your necessary arms, the slow motion
sweet collision

our bodies
thrashing thru
the deep messages
entering each other

you could be anybody
but are not
barely anyone
drawing me into
yourself

when i die
almost there in your arms

who ever you are

you appear gone from this world

now i'm free to imagine
an end to knowing what ends

i came to know you

the world
this blind heart can't imagine

tho i enter
looking up to see
a place
you make otherwise
not being here

i will never
not
know you
a dream come true
alive as origin
at the end of the world

Oh yes Oh yes
a sweet caress

a deep &
blessed mess
pulled together
for this
one extravagant event

a kiss

mouth of mine for an instant
has no end
slips into the realm beyond

the social
or person.
rain is there, trees
for example
those pears hang from,
pouring.

what do you think we're doing here anyway?

green grass & fires

music above my head
flaring

Oh yes Oh yes
a bright & crazy
green caress

Gerry Gilbert /
FOREGONE CONCLUSIONS
nineteen seventy seventh

PAR TONE

+

this is a fast map of a white hole

+

more & less

+

palpablee

blood in the rain

+

m.t. mt.

+

mystory

histery

+

I was only writing a poem

+

winter

lost her

+

jazz
takesame

+

reproduction of the owners
or parts thereof may not be
made without permission of
this poem.

+

your
body
you

+

half the Fraser River Delta lands in the USA

+

trip up/on my word

+

you want me to make something of it?

well — we all got drunk

had a few laffs

& hit the sack

nobody had to drive home

+

where there's laughter there's smoke

+

hollow nites

+

I'm true

with you

+ +

PART TWO

+

in

&

up

show

down

&

out

+

I dream of Jeannie with the light

may the force of habit be with you

drink like a chimney

+

+

+

+

+

+

give up
take down

+

leaf alone/less moon

+ +

PARTTTTHREE

+

sweeping up the staircase

+

sinking in the rain

+

then there's

el letter perfecto

for those who dont

+

one day

some year

+

tit tick

but talk

snatch watch

cock clock

+

RED DOOR

+

she's up to it

I'm past it

+

I was right the first time

we need the cat

+

fog

prondl

mom

+

per daughter

+



+

f oregon e

WOOD SCULPTURE OF THE AMERICAS

A Symposium at Klee Wyck House Park,
West Vancouver, July 1 - August 15, 1977



Ann Rosenberg of The Capilano Review interviewed nine of the ten artists chosen to participate in Wood Sculpture of the Americas. The tenth participant, Barry Cogswell, (The Capilano Review No. 11) supplied information more recently. Deanna Levis, Lois Redman, Sue-Ann Alderson helped with the preparation of the sculptors' statements.

A Note About the Symposium: The Sculpture Symposium Society of B.C. that had previously organized the Vancouver International Stone Symposium in 1975 followed its first successful event with *Wood Sculpture of the Americas*. Ten well known sculptors were selected representing Canada, the United States, Venezuela and Colombia in the understanding that they would work together at Klee Wyck Park for the duration of the symposium in order to produce a permanent collection of contemporary wood sculpture that would be located in various sites in West Vancouver.

From the day the symposium opened the public was encouraged to watch the progress of the works as they were being made and to attend lectures and events held at Klee Wyck Park. A number of art students were hired to assist the sculptors in their work; other young people were employed to run the everyday business of the symposium. The event was sponsored by the Municipality of West Vancouver, Park Royal Shopping Centre Ltd., The Canada Council, Young Canada Works Program, The Department of Indian Development and Northern Affairs, the British Columbia Cultural Fund. There were, in addition, a host of donors and contributors, too lengthy to list here. The sculpture that came out of this symposium in our opinion is exceptionally fine.

— AR



Fumio Yoshimura / BICYCLES

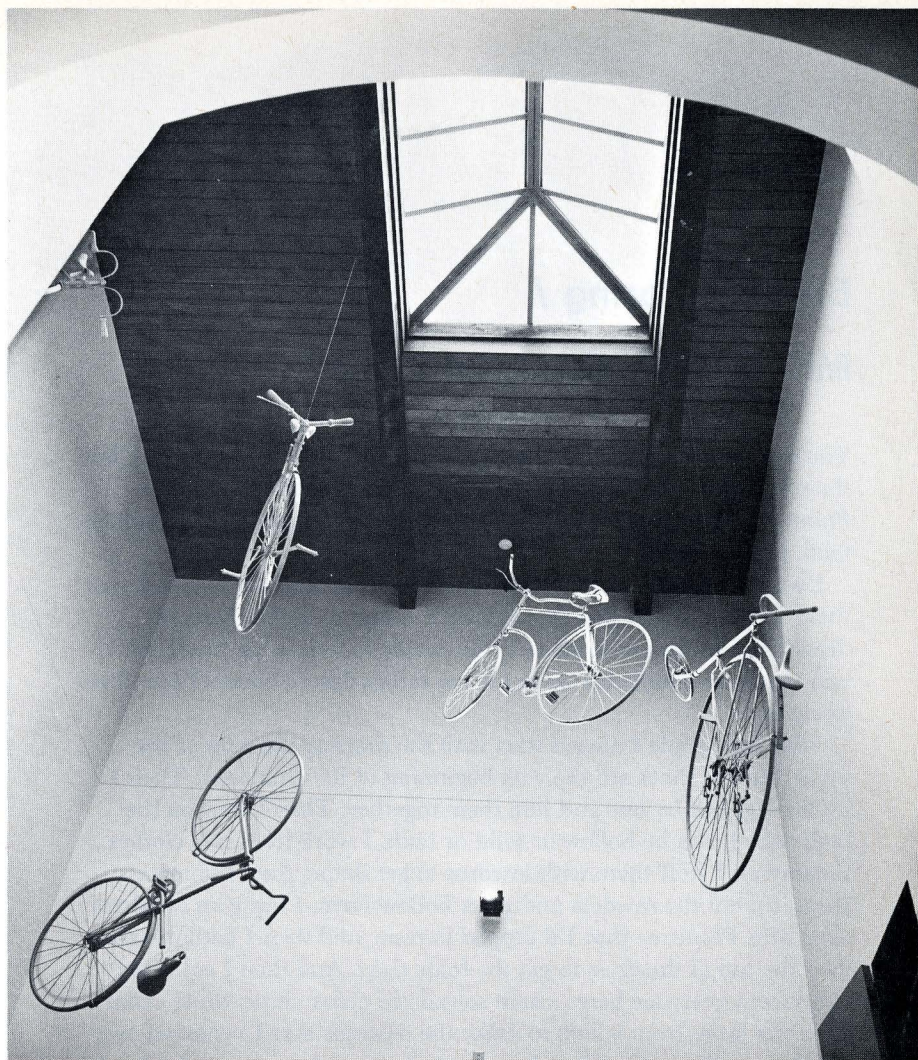
I started to use wood because I wanted to make things very light so that they could be suspended in air. I think that wood is lighter than papier mâché, because that material has lots of glue in it. So that is the first reason that prompted me to use wood, but later on I realized that, particularly when I lived in Japan, I was surrounded by wood and even now, although I live in New York, I still am. When you take a train there's woods around you; when you open a box you smell the cedar. People are still using lots of wood in Japan, but the trouble is they have to import it from Canada. . . .

I used to make kites, so perhaps that's why my works must fly. And when I was making the kites, I used to pick up hoops from the street. And soon I was thinking, why not make wheels? I extended the wheel into the notion of a bicycle. So I made one bicycle, more bicycles until I had a group of them for my first exhibition. Marcel Duchamp bought one and encouraged me and I'm pretty sure that Mrs. Duchamp still has one of my kites. I once made a motorbike, but it has nothing to do with my bicycles — it's a floorpiece that weighs about twenty-five pounds. It took me four months to make it, which I consider very fast.

With my helper in New York, I can make one bicycle a month. Here because of the assistants, I've made five bicycles in six weeks and that's really incredible.

I am interested in the concept of fragility and strength. Something like a piece of field grass — delicate but very very strong. I am also concerned with craftsmanship and yet I can't even hammer my shelves straight at home. Everything I do comes from improvisation. I have an idea. I somehow manage it. That's all my secret is.

— FUMIO YOSHIMURA



Barbara Spring /

MR. & MRS. CARVER PLUMTREE

You're not the first person to see me as a Grant Wood for the 70's, but there's no real connection, nor did I come to *Mr. & Mrs. Carver Plumtree* through folk art. I came to the people in wood from making food. Let me explain.

I was terribly involved for a while in making food out of wood and then, after I'd exhausted that subject I began to make chests of drawers and soon I wanted to make people to fit in with the things I had made, and the brick walls for the rather dismal houses I saw them living in.

With the people I always start with the shoes or the soles of the shoes, but the shoes are the very beginning of the character. Then I do the legs one by one and join them together. Then I start on the body which can be hollow or solid or both. I work from real clothes sometimes. I stuff them with sawdust to get shape, then I fibreglass them, tip out the sawdust and get a hollow form. I hung an old dress over Mrs. Plumtree that I'd dipped in resin, and then I laid fibreglass over the top of the dress to get the folds right. And then I collected chips from everyone here: chain-sawed red cedar chips, white cedar from the lathe from which to make the patterns that I veneered over the dress underneath. Then I made the head and put it on; the hands and the book came last. And of course there's all the filling and sanding and finishing, and the difficult business of getting the wood which has resin in it to take to fibreglass.

Mr. Carver Plumtree was made in about the same way and very quickly too, because everyone was egging me on and the assistants were so good — they cut every one of those peg ribs on his sweater. *That's devoted!* And Fumio just had to make his glasses and fit them on. I mean, I had no drawing, so I couldn't say to the assistants, "Look, here you go, follow this." And so we did it together and had a

lot of fun as it came out. I worked faster here than I ever have before.

I knew that I was making an interior piece and I knew that the lady would carry a book called *Cast-Iron Cooking*. When I was certain that the figures would be in a library, I added his books: *The Pure & the Impure*, *The Confessions of Molly Bloom*.

People always have a lot of fun around my works, but I don't always intend them as funny. Mrs. Plumtree, for example, is an everyday housewife. She isn't the best looking person in the world; she doesn't have the greatest shoes. But she's got quite nice legs.

— BARBARA SPRING





Calvin Hunt /

THE RAVEN WHO STOLE THE SUN

My sculpture illustrates one of many Kwa-Guilth myths; it concerns how the Raven stole the Sun:

Hundreds of years ago the world was in darkness. The Raven heard about a great chief who kept the Sun in a cedar chest. He began his search and after many months, he found the chief in a Kwa-Guilth village. He watched the village and devised a plan for stealing and releasing the Sun.

The Raven began to watch the activities of the chief's daughter who was a princess. He noticed that she went to a special place by the river to get her drinking water. There a pine tree hung over the pool. The Raven transformed himself into a pine needle and dropped from the tree into her pitcher of water. Unaware of the pine needle in the water, she drank and conceived a son.

As he grew up, he became fascinated by the cedar box. He would clamour and holler, demand to play with the box. But the chief would not let him in. After several months, however, the chief gave in.

The boy went to the box and opened it. He changed into a Raven. He escaped with the Sun through the smoke hole in the big house and gave the Sun back to the sky.

Obviously the subject matter is very important to me and I continue the traditions of the Northwest Coast carver. For the carver, red cedar and yellow cedar have been the most traditional woods for larger pieces; alder, fruit tree wood for smaller pieces. (With cedar, you need no preservatives.) I have carvers for relations, I started off by hanging around Tony Hunt at Vancouver Park which was started by my grandfather, and I was with Tony for seven years. I was brought up in Victoria. I've been carving since I quit school at thirteen. I am still an apprentice with Tony Hunt and his father Henry. Twenty years is the usual apprenticeship.

I didn't design the piece for a particular site, and at first the mayor wanted it for his office but now it's going to be in the foyer of the municipal hall which I'm glad about because then more people will be able to see it.

I really enjoyed working at the symposium, found it nice and relaxing, but perhaps that was because I didn't take on too much to complete in the time I had, not like some of the other artists did.

— CALVIN HUNT





Hernando Tejada / TROPICAL WOMAN

First of all I was a painter of murals, then I worked for a year making marionettes and that began my transformation into a sculptor. And one day, I could see this fantastic world that I would create, and so I began to add carved figure upon carved figure almost as if my sculptures were paintings. And then I realized that I'd better quit teaching, so I stopped all my classes and immersed myself in making these sculptures.

I started with a woman called *Rosario la Mujer Amario*: she has three legs and her breasts open up and there is a little container for a shot glass; she has no shoe for her third foot. All my titles rhyme. Most of my ideas come from my imagination, although sometimes something out of reality will trigger them. For example, I heard of a woman who had a lover whom she kept in an attic, and there was a cat who would go and visit him, so I made a reclining woman with a cat.

My world of wood is not finished. I have a very long list of pieces I would like to do, enough to keep me going for another eight or ten years. My mother was an artist also, and by the time I was six, I was already drawing. My sister is an artist too.

— HERNANDO TEJADA





Domenico Casasanta / CARACAS — '77

Well, first of all my English is just my English — not the true English, so I'm sorry. But I learned all I have from being here. When I came I could only say three words.

When I work small, I work in marble. The biggest thing I make is maybe five feet. When I work big and outside, I switch to steel, or when I work indoors on a large scale, I use wood. I prefer wood because it's rich and textured. I like plywood because it comes in special units, special thicknesses. But Canadian plywood is very soft compared with the plywood we have in Caracas.

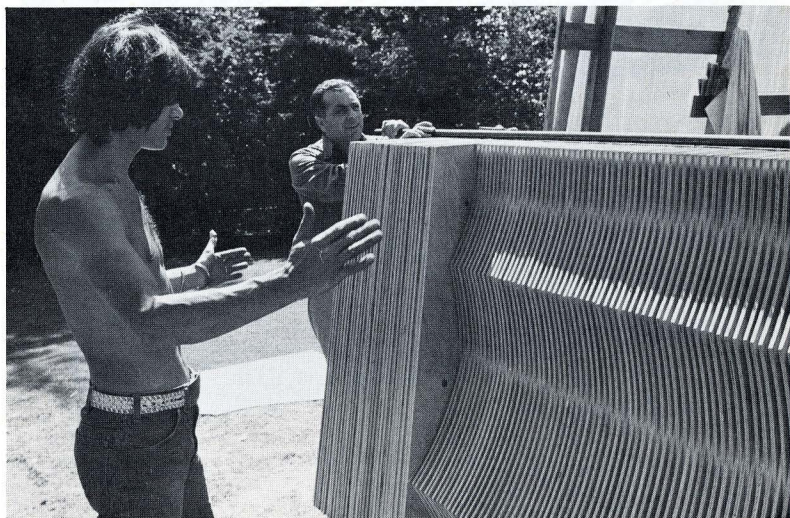
I left Italy when I was twenty-two, so I think I'm not an Italian artist, and when I first went to Venezuela it was not a very good time. The last revolution had just started. So I've been making art for only nine years, and I think that Caracas has a strong influence on my work. Caracas loves architecture and I love architecture. Caracas is a very young city — the only bad thing is that we destroy the old city — and while the new city is just like any big city in the world, it's something special, if just for me. When I return, I will be doing a sculpture in collaboration with an architect. The work I'm designing will be 22 by 220 feet and it will be rendered in concrete. It's my first *big* commission, although I've had lots of others.

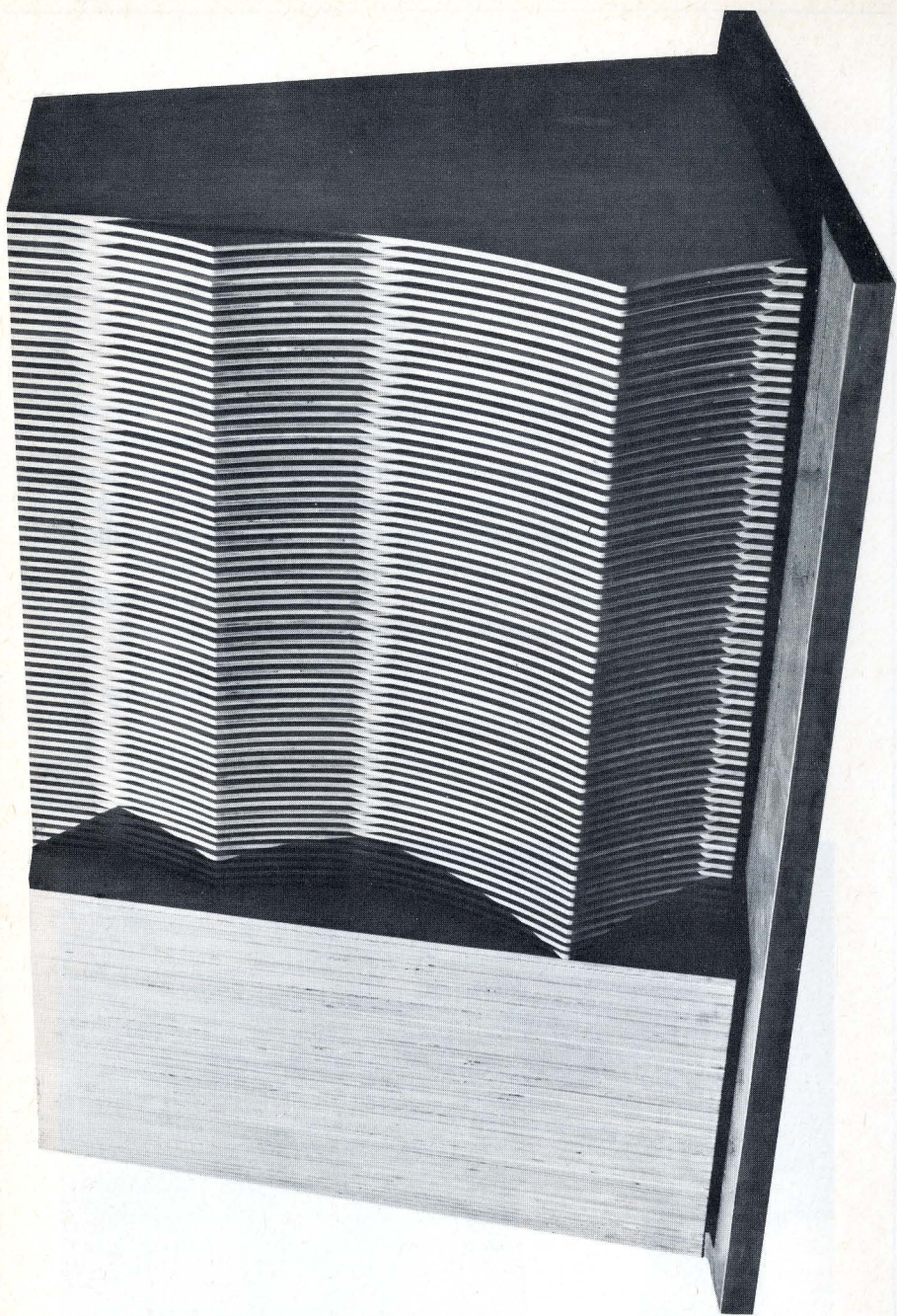
I like to use prefabricated material — marble cut to precision thickness, plywood, etc. — but then I want to mold the material as the design I have in mind suggests, I want to give the material *detail*.

Sometimes I want to destroy the material and any material — bronze, steel, marble, wood — is good for me. When I started, I was not sure where my piece would go, but now I understand it will be in the new Mall at Park Royal. I think it will be a good place because the work will have some relationship to the architecture and that is what I like and I know it will be a good space, a big space with lots of light.

It was a good experience being here. I learned a way to work with other artists although I cannot be changed. And although I won't change my art because of this symposium, it has enriched my knowledge about art and other artists. And next week I'll be seeing the real country. I'm going to the Arctic.

— DOMENICO CASASANTA





Joseph DeAngelis /

VANCOUVER PIECE, BURRARD PIECE

I've been working with manufactured forms, found forms — mainly from the automobile industry around Detroit which is close to La Salle where I live. In the last few years I've been doing mainly sculpture in the tradition of constructivism. Picasso, Gonzales, David Smith and Anthony Caro are of interest to me. I studied to be a painter but even then I did wall reliefs, collage and assemblage. When I attended a College Art Association symposium on sculpture, I learned that painters will tend to make sculpture by putting things together. It's the additive approach, so maybe that's why I work the way I do.

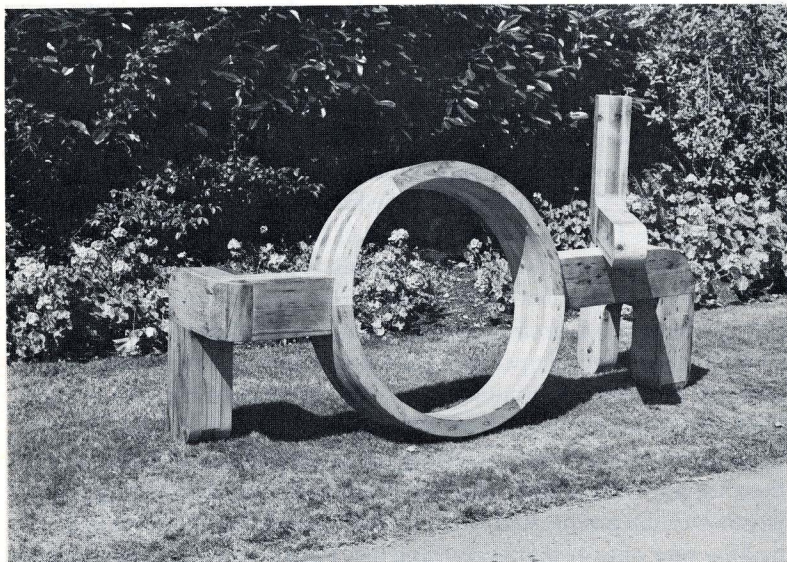
For this symposium, as I was uncertain about where the finished works would be placed, I was mainly concerned with making them suitable for an interior. I designed them so that they can sit on the ground, so that they relate well to the human scale. They require good light, because I create shapes with lots of cavities. There must be enough space so that the viewer can walk around my work.

Of the two sculptures I did for the symposium, *Vancouver Piece* that incorporates a circle is most like some other works I've completed. I use fairly abstract shapes that I discover which are sometimes really intricate and cleverly laminated. I would never take the time to build such things and the enjoyment comes from discovering them, putting them into a new context, revealing the undersurfaces of them so that they are put back to their original unpainted state, discovering the woods and the grains. And when I finish assembling the parts and making new ones so that everything fits, I put a minimal treatment on

it — usually oil, and maybe I'll sand it and wax it. But I'm not that meticulous about a very super finish. When you look at the piece I want you to see that it had life before. The second work, *Burrard Piece* uses forms from ship yards that are unique to this area, and I think that it's successful, and it's *newer* for me.

I tend to work spontaneously. Sometimes I make drawings, but I work from the forms I find. Being out on display there at Klee Wyck Park was a little awkward, because I put a form into a new position and move back to consider it there, and it's a crucial time. People would be there, and so sometimes I'd go away so they wouldn't know who was doing the piece. I'd back into the hedges. Working with the other artists, it's been an exercise in timing. But it's really been nice.

— JOSEPH R. DEANGELIS





Chung Hung /

**AN ENCLOSED LINE FORMING THREE
PLANES PERPENDICULAR TO EACH
OTHER IN A SYMMETRICAL ORDER**

I spend most of my time making sculpture and stuffing it into my basement. I'm a recent graduate of the Vancouver School of Art and although I've exhibited in group shows, I've never had a one-man exhibition. The first big piece I did was in Spain in 1974.

This is my first wood sculpture. When I look at the material I love it. Then I take off from the way you would use wood in everyday life, construction methods like one uses for building floors, and the recognition of the pre-fabricated nature of the material. Then I use structure to solve a problem and for me the interest is in geometry and contemporary language.

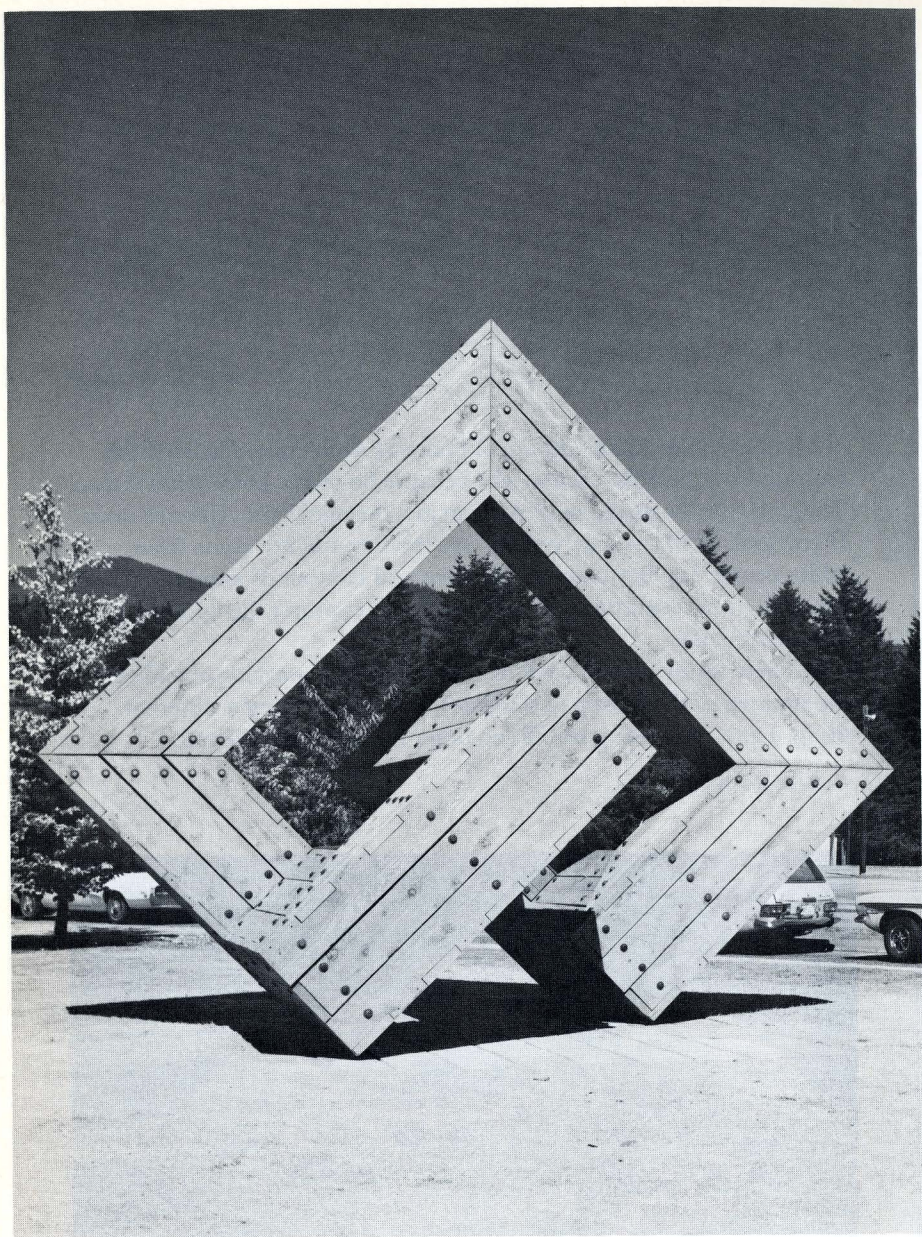
When I am working on a piece like this one I play around with photo-montage setting my maquette against the site, trying to discover the scale and proportion of the piece, thinking about technical information such as the safety factor. And as I've been interested in the idea of putting a sculpture on an island, the Ambleside site I chose offered a special opportunity. My sculpture is in the centre of a circular boulevard in the centre of a rather bare park, and now there's something to see and if you can't find a parking space it's something to drive around and it can calm you down. I think it's a very peaceful sculpture, although the shape itself is strong and powerful. I finished all the units at Klee Wyck Park, put them together, took them apart and reassembled them at Ambleside. That's one nice thing about wood — at least you can handle it.

I had a conversation with an old man at Ambleside. He liked the sculpture but he didn't know why because he didn't know *what it was*. Then he gave an example of African art, the masks the Africans make. If you look at African art you can see the face has not come from white people for they capture the form and contour of another face; if you look at my sculpture you will see that it captures the appearance of everyday life.

It's been really nice to work at the symposium, working outside in the summer with a group of sculptors, everybody doing a different thing. I can see other possibilities, other ideas for using wood.

— CHUNG HUNG





Barry Cogswell /

TWO COLUMNS OF SPACE No. 5

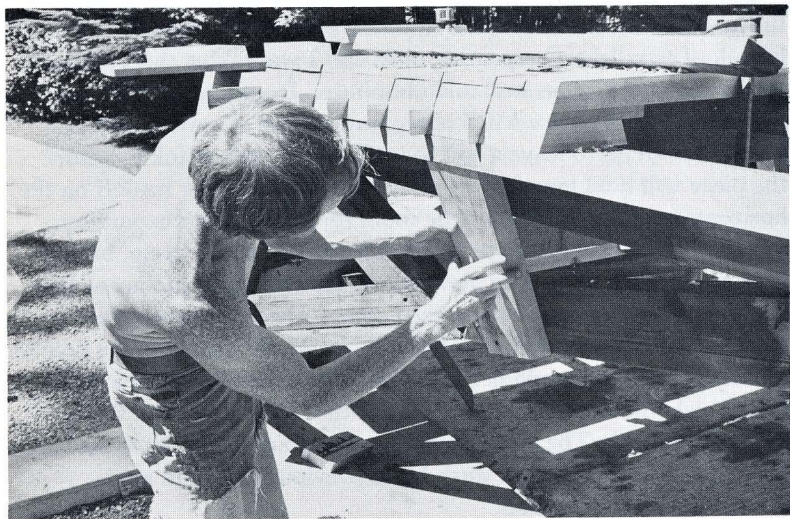
I like wood as a material for working with, the quality of the finished surface. The first sculptures I made in B.C. were wood — and let's face it, if you want to build anything in this part of the world it's the obvious material. I'm of the opinion that soft woods are better for indoor pieces, particularly wall pieces that people are not going to climb on with studded boots. And you have to watch large laminated boards out of doors because they are very susceptible to cracking and splitting due to the uneven expansion and contracting resulting from the changing moisture content of the wood. You can imagine what happens when a board that is full of water freezes and expands.

Luckily by the time I came to do the symposium piece, I'd become intrigued by the use of graphic divisions of surface, where the surface is built of parallel and repeating units and I was taking this approach to my works in Corten steel and aluminum. It seemed natural to build *Two Columns of Space No. 5* of separate planks of various widths. I've been careful to leave a $\frac{1}{8}$ " space between each plank to ensure the piece will hold together properly, to allow for water run-off on the horizontal surface, to give a little room for each plank's expansion. Wood expands and contracts quite seriously across the grain, but very little along the length. And you have to take this fact into account to prevent the piece from tearing itself apart. The end of each plank is secured to the frame with two bolts, but only one is snug in the hole in the frame to keep the plank in position; the second bolt is in a larger hole which allows the bolt to wander with the movement of the expanding plank. The symposium gave me an opportunity to see how *Two Columns of Space* (a work I had previously done in steel) would translate into wood.

I think when my work is installed in the proper place at Klee Wyck, it's going to look really nice. I like the intimacy and scale of the park. It's going to be set near the pond with a sweeping view across The Lions from the South and East. And there's the potential of planting shrubs or trees of my choice behind it as a backdrop. It will sit on four concrete slabs four inches wider all round than the four base units in *Two Columns of Space No. 5*. And the whole area under it will be mossy. So I think I can have it exactly as I want.

As for the symposium . . . I remember the joy of working in the hot sun, and the charge I got from doing my piece at certain stages of its development. I had to work under a lot of stress to get the sculpture finished. I think it is amazing that we all finished within one or two days of the deadline.

— BARRY COGSWELL





Hadyn Davies /

SYMPOSIUM PIECE (FOR EVA)

I am interested in constructivist artists in general (Ben Nicholson is one name you'd know). And now that I've tended to reduce the volumes in my works and go to much more linear pieces, I'm being called a constructivist myself. My primary medium is steel but I think it was on the basis of a large wood piece that I made for Lambton College of Arts and Technology that I was invited to participate in this symposium. In certain sites the warmth and colour of wood work very well.

Symposium Piece (For Eva) is made of red cedar. The ten units that compose it were precut, prelaminated to my specifications. Further elements were added after I came to Vancouver. As the work is placed outdoors in front of the West Vancouver Municipal Hall, I had to consider carefully the prospect of its survival. After many discussions with Western Forest Laboratories, I decided to char black the entire surface of each unit with a propane torch, treat the end rings with epoxy adhesive, treat all the surfaces with oil. Its lasting quality is ensured. I think it will outlast me, anyhow. And the colour is right with the grey of the building.

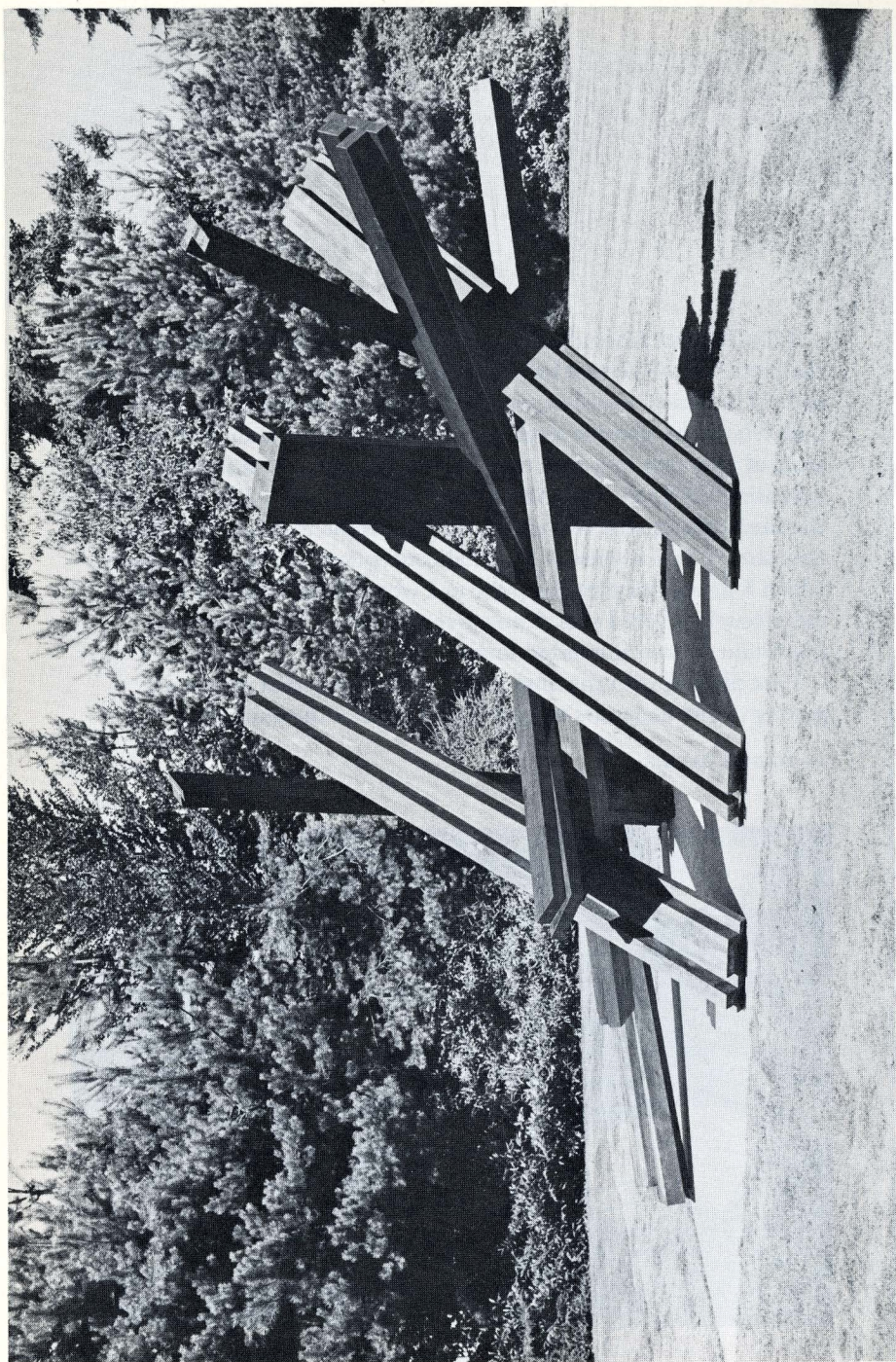
I like to work for a particular site and I was very pleased with the one I chose. Further, I was delighted that the Municipal Hall would accept a work sight unseen. At no time was there any kind of judgment imposed and this meant a fascinating reversal of what one might expect — I drove myself even harder than usual to fulfil a responsibility.

I like to work from a maquette so that I can begin to work out how the piece will be viewed by people standing around it. The first, on a scale of one-inch-to-a-foot, was not sufficiently detailed to permit me to understand the jointing details, so I made another maquette on the scale of two-inch-to-a-foot that I could take apart and study as I was executing the final work. As I assembled *Symposium Piece (For Eva)* the smaller maquette was on the site for people to examine so that they would have a sense of the final conception; the larger maquette which I assembled piece by piece as I went along showed them and me precisely where I was at any given moment. This process, so important for me, interested them.

I am pleased with the final result. I am happy that people are getting out of their cars to have a good look at the sculpture.

— HADYN DAVIES





Robert Behrens / STANDING WAVE

I work in different materials — steel, concrete, glass and wood. Wood is a problem when you're using it in any condition where the climate changes, where the sun's up on one side and down on the other, or if it's in a dry condition then a moist condition. The material moves constantly in and out, so I've taken precautions in that regard.

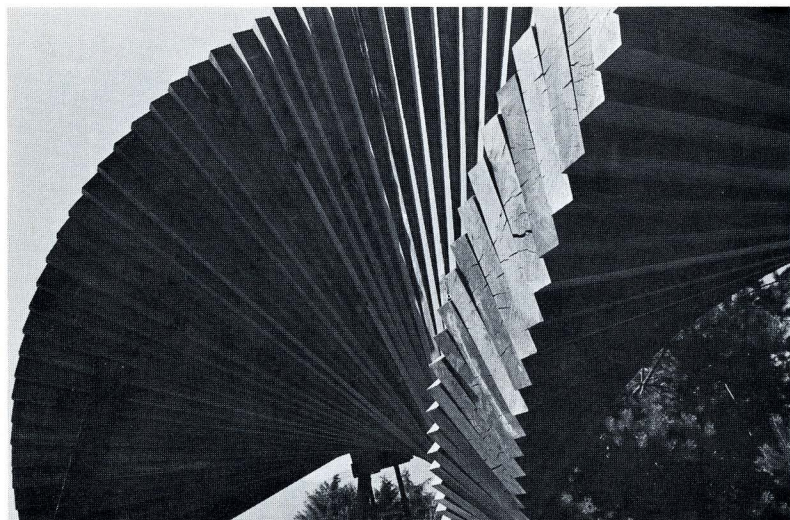
Standing Wave is under such a tremendous amount of compression that any small amount of shrinkage or expansion is not going to affect it. The pressure treatment tends to reduce the possibility of the sculpture taking on moisture or losing moisture, so it's going to be quite stable. The piece is constructed from 3 x 12 hemlock pieces — 40 pieces of 20 foot lengths, the remaining pieces in 8 foot lengths, all threaded about a 6 inch pipe. They're each fastened to the next one, continuously. I moved them as they were being placed. The pipe has a threaded rod that goes through the entire piece, and between the pipe and the rod there's gravel. When all the pieces were placed, then a nut was put on each end of the threaded rod and a hydraulic jack compressed the entire thing together — it's a post-tension construction.



I think that the siting of the work comes down to an understanding of the element of designs in space — a concept that goes back to the Renaissance tradition and even before that. Sculpture is not just an object to be seen in a gallery; it's something that has play and interplay with the people in the place where it's located. The Ambleside site we eventually agreed to is great. It gave me the chance to do a piece of sculpture that was similar to my original design, but which related more intimately to the idea of being near the water, a kind of wave form.

I wanted to make for Vancouver a sculpture that embodied the idea of things that go in and out, the coming and going of a harbour, the idea of departure, the frame in which departure happens. It also, hopefully, gives a symbolic sense of arrival. Since I'm from the interior of the continent, it was for me very exciting and important to recognize where the water is and I wanted my sculpture to be *near* the water.

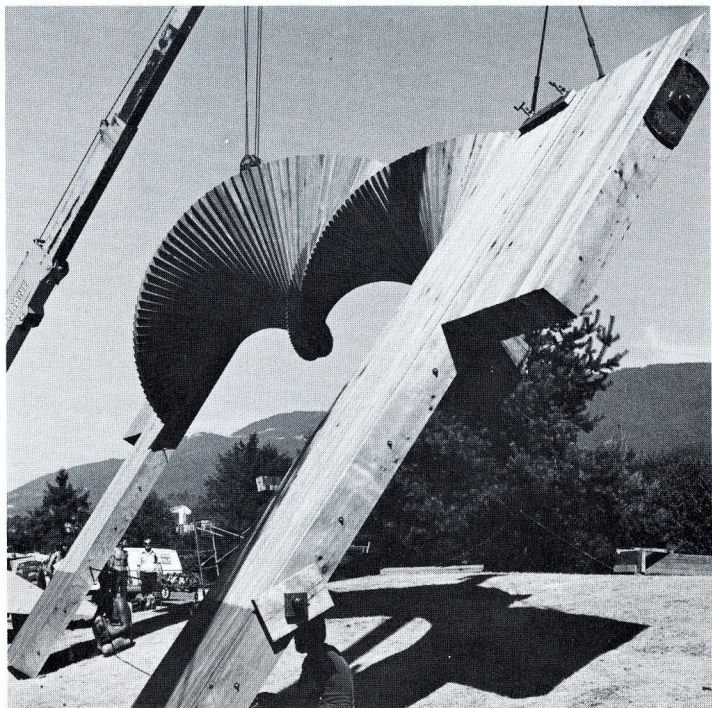
What I'm always doing with my sculpture is to make something where the work is in visual harmony with what is happening in the place. I like to make a clear statement of intent, so my work is simplified. By simplification I mean that I search for a common denominator — some place for the sculpture *to happen*. I see the wood method I use as a natural process because I take pieces of material without essentially altering them.



I take them the way they come from the manufacturer without altering dimension, drill a few holes in each one, put the pieces together. The sculpture is made out of right angles — flat surfaces that are put together and come out as something curved, something soft.

The artist has the opportunity of removing himself from the industrial process in a certain way; the artist can observe what industry can produce which strikes in him a chord of harmony. My interest is in finding a process so simple, so direct that the result of that process is actually the summation of all the bits and pieces it takes to get there, something that's entirely greater than any bit or part of the process.

—ROBERT BEHRENS





IMAGES WOOD SCULPTURE OF THE AMERICAS

Chung Hung drilling.

Photography: Jim Breukleman

Fumio Yoshimura at work on a bicycle.

Photography: Jim Breukleman

Fumio Yoshimura, *Bicycles*, summer 1977, yellow cedar, dowelling and cane, lifesize, installed at the West Vancouver Memorial Library.

Photography: Tod Greenaway

Barbara Spring fibreglassing.

Photography: Jim Breukleman

Barbara Spring, *Mr. & Mrs. Plumtree Carver*, summer 1977, yellow and red cedar, fibreglass, lifesize, to be installed at the West Vancouver Memorial Library.

Photography: Jim Gorman

Calvin Hunt with an almost complete *Raven Who Stole the Sun*.

Photography: Jim Breukleman

Calvin Hunt, *The Raven Who Stole the Sun*, summer 1977, red cedar painted relief, w. 6', ht. 3', d. 2'5", to be installed at the West Vancouver Municipal Hall.

Photography: Jim Gorman, Vancouver Art Gallery

Hernando Tejada pausing.

Photography: Jim Breukleman

Hernando Tejada, *Tropical Woman*, summer 1977, yellow and red cedar on fir base with ceramic applications, w. 8'6", ht. 6'9", to be installed at West Vancouver Memorial Library.

Photography: Jim Gorman, Vancouver Art Gallery

Domenico Casasanta and assistant finishing *Caracas '77*.

Photography: Jim Breukleman

Domenico Casasanta, *Caracas '77*, summer 1977, laminated plywood, w. 6', ht. 4', d. 4', to be installed at Park Royal Shopping Centre.

Photography: Jim Gorman, Vancouver Art Gallery

Joseph DeAngelis, *Vancouver Piece*, summer 1977, foundry pattern assemblage, l. 8', ht. 6', d. 5', to be installed at Park Royal Shopping Centre.

Photography: Jim Gorman, Vancouver Art Gallery

Chung Hung and assistant contemplating his maquette.

Photography: Jim Breukleman

Chung Hung, *An Enclosed Line Forming Three Planes Perpendicular to Each Other in a Symmetrical Order*, summer 1977, w. 15', ht. 17'6", d. 12'6", installed on a traffic island at Ambleside Park.

Photography: Jim Gorman, Vancouver Art Gallery

Barry Cogswell sweating it.

Photography: Jim Breukleman

Barry Cogswell, *Two Columns of Space, No. 5*, summer 1977, red cedar, w. 12'6", ht. 3'4", l. 20', installed at Klee Wyck House Park (temporary site).

Photography: Barry Cogswell

Hadyn Davies with maquette #1 & #2.

Photography: Jim Breukleman

Hadyn Davies, *Symposium Piece (For Eva)*, summer 1977, red cedar charred, l. 20', ht. 12', d. 12', installed at the West Vancouver Municipal Hall.

Photography: Jim Breukleman

installing *Standing Wave*

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detail, *Standing Wave*

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raising *Standing Wave*

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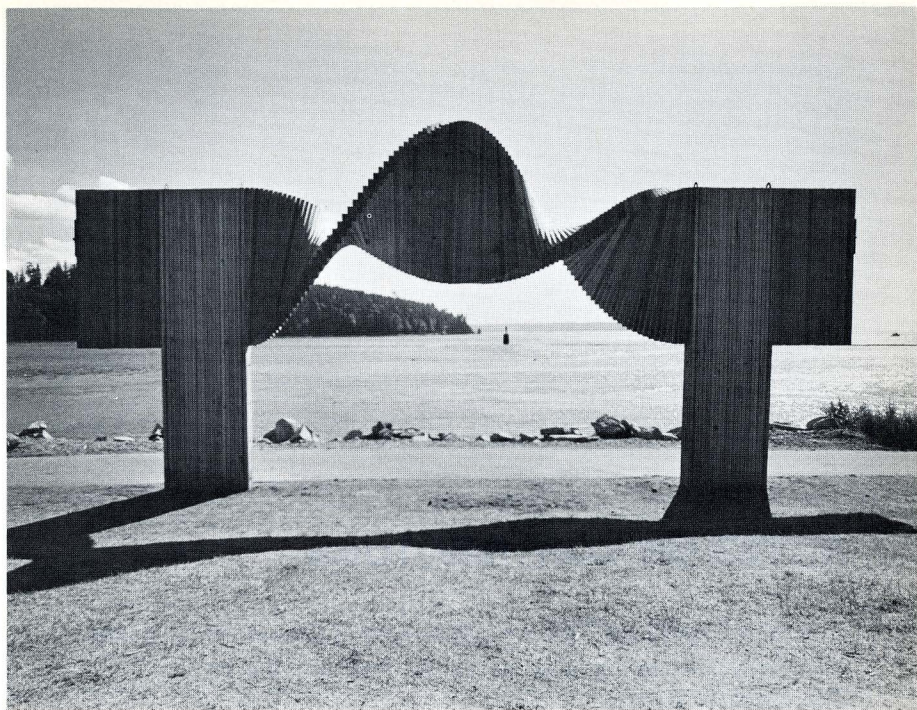
Robert Behrens, *Standing Wave*, summer 1977, hemlock, w. 40'3", ht. 19'6", d. 10'9", installed at Ambleside Park.

Photography: Bob Keziere, Vancouver Art Gallery

Standing Wave, from the mound at Ambleside Park.

Photography: Bob Keziere, Vancouver Art Gallery

(The Jim Breukleman photographs were printed by Tod Greenaway studios. We are grateful for the generous co-operation of Jim Gorman and Bob Keziere of The Vancouver Art Gallery.)



DAVID MACWILLIAM studied at the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design. He is currently an Extension Animateur for the Vancouver Art Gallery, and Managing Editor of Vancouver's art tabloid *Criteria*.

DUNCAN McNAUGHTON lives in Bolinas, California (does Bolinas mean whales?) and has published two splendid and very important books of poetry this year: *A Passage of Saint Devil* (Timbouctoo Press, California) and *Sumeriana* (Talon Books, Vancouver.)

HARVEY CHOMETSKY edits *Repository* and gets his poems from Prince George earth & aether. "Poetry," Harvey says, "is above all an *attitude*, a specific vision. Poetry exists because I live poetry, I don't write it."

BARRY McKINNON lives in Prince George, B.C. and teaches at New Caledonia College. He has published work in, among other places, NMFG and *The Capilano Review*. The most recent of his very fine books are *Death of a Lyric Poet*, and *Songs & Speeches* (New Caledonia Writing Series).

DAVID PHILLIPS lives in North Vancouver. He has published previously in *The Capilano Review* and is currently putting together a collection of five or six years' worth of poetry for publication in the near future. *Wild Roses* was originally published as a monograph by Prester John in the spring of 1977.

GERRY GILBERT is a Vancouver poet who promotes the art in many ways. He runs the New Era Social Club, organizes readings, publishes broadsides and small volumes of new work, and edits *B.C. Monthly*.

FUMIO YOSHIMURA was born in Kamakura, Japan in 1926. He received an MFA in painting from Tokyo University in 1950. He has exhibited widely and his works are owned by many public and private collections. His wooded imitations of things from this world transcend the 'models' from which they are derived. He lives in New York City.

BARBARA SPRING was born in Essex, England, and attended various schools, including the Gravesend School of Arts in Kent and the Central School of Art in London. She has exhibited her work since 1962 and has received a number of prizes for her sculpture in California where she now lives at Big Sur.

CALVIN HUNT, an Alert Bay Kwa-Guilth Indian who was born in 1956, has spent most of his life in Victoria, B.C. He has served seven years of a carver's apprenticeship with Tony and Henry Hunt. He has contributed to group shows and with Tony Hunt he recently completed two thirty-foot poles — one intended for Frankfurt, the other for the National Museum at Osaka.

HERNANDO TEJADA was born in Risaralda, Colombia. In 1946 he graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts of the National University of Bogata. Between 1948 and 1976, in addition to contributing to forty-nine group exhibitions, he has been active with mural commissions and set design.

DOMENICO CASASANTA was born in Bugnara, Italy, in 1935. He studied at the Scuola Statale d'Arte of Sulmona and subsequently at similar schools at Naples and Rome. In the last ten years he has contributed to numerous one-man and group exhibitions, especially in Venezuela where he lives, and in New York where he has a dealer.

JOSEPH DEANGELIS now lives in LaSalle, Ontario. He was educated at Rhode Island School of Design and Syracuse University. He teaches now at the University of Windsor, Ontario. He has participated in several group and one-man shows.

CHUNG HUNG was born in Canton, China in 1946. He studied civil engineering in Chu Hei University, Hong Kong. In 1973, he graduated from the Vancouver School of Art with Honours in Sculpture. He has executed two competition pieces: the first, as winner of The First International Sculpture Competition in Barcelona, Spain; the second, the winning design for the Competition S.S. Beaver, Fort Langley, Canada. Recently he was included in "*This Point of View: 60 B.C. Painters, Sculptors, Photographers, Graphic and Video Artists*" at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

BARRY COGSWELL was educated at the Hammersmith College of Art. In 1964 he received the National Diploma in pottery, with sculpture as a secondary area of expertise. He lives in North Vancouver and teaches at Capilano College. In 1975 Integrated Plane was installed at the North Vancouver Civic Centre. Exhibiting in Vancouver since 1974, he was a recent participant in "*This Point of View: 60 B.C. Painters, Sculptors, Photographers, Graphic and Video Artists*" at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Barry Cogswell/RECENT SCULPTURE was published in *The Capilano Review*, No. 11.

HADYN DAVIES emigrated to Canada in 1929. In 1939, he graduated from Central Technical School and eight years later, from the Ontario College of Art. After pursuing several careers (film, publishing, advertising) he turned to sculpture in 1962.

BOB BEHRENS lives in Denver, Colorado. He was born in Teaneck, New Jersey in 1939. He studied at the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York, the Kansas City Art Institute and the University of Denver. He specializes in outdoor environmental sculpture.

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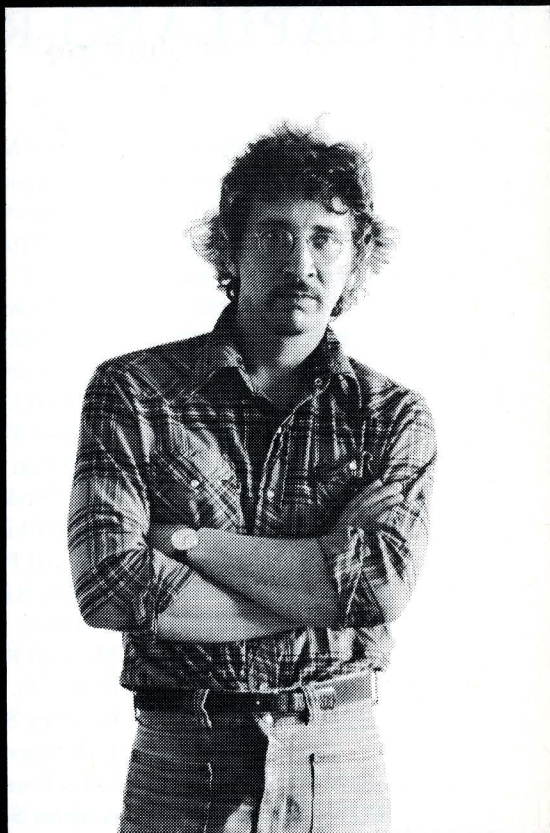
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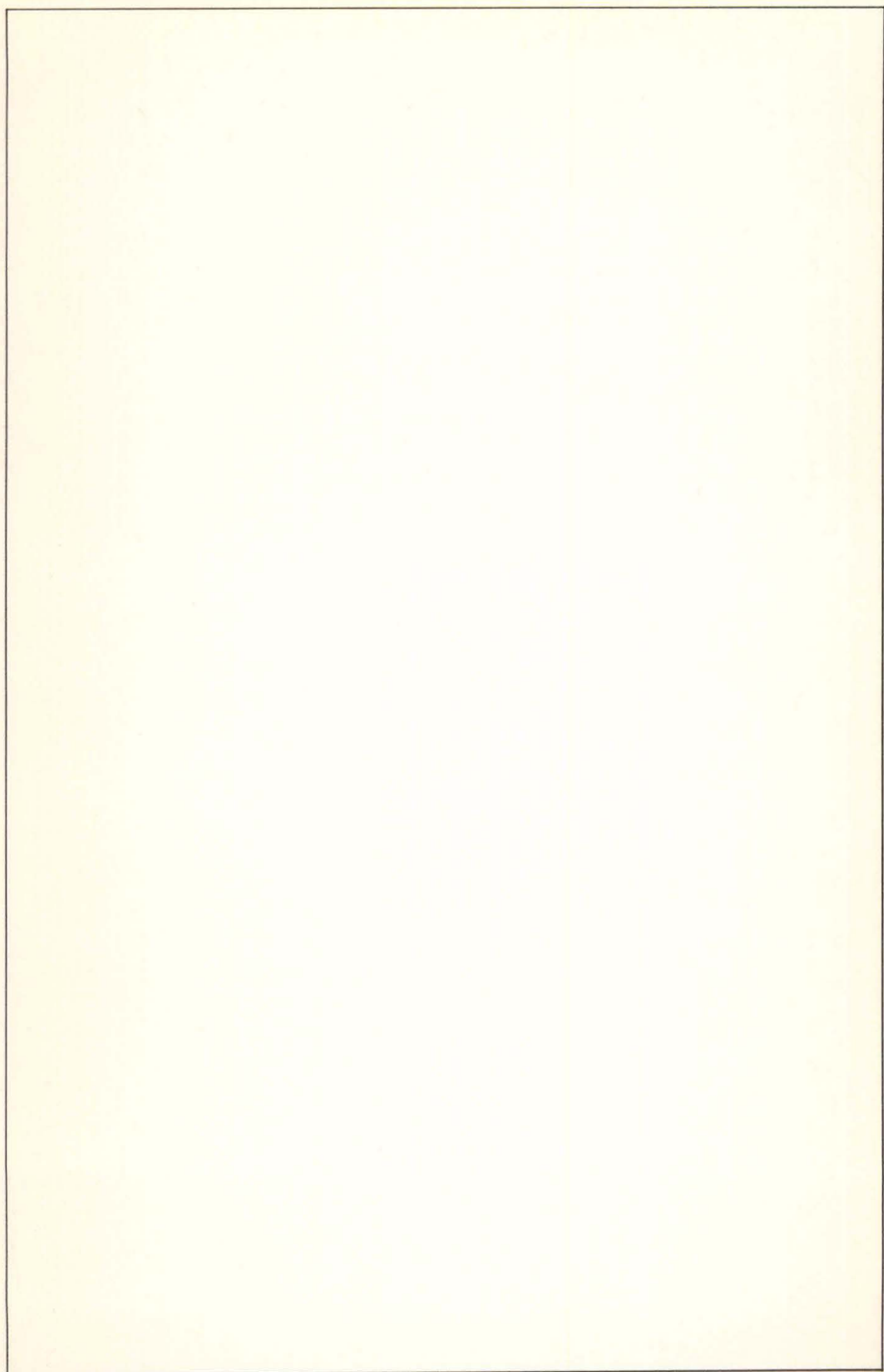
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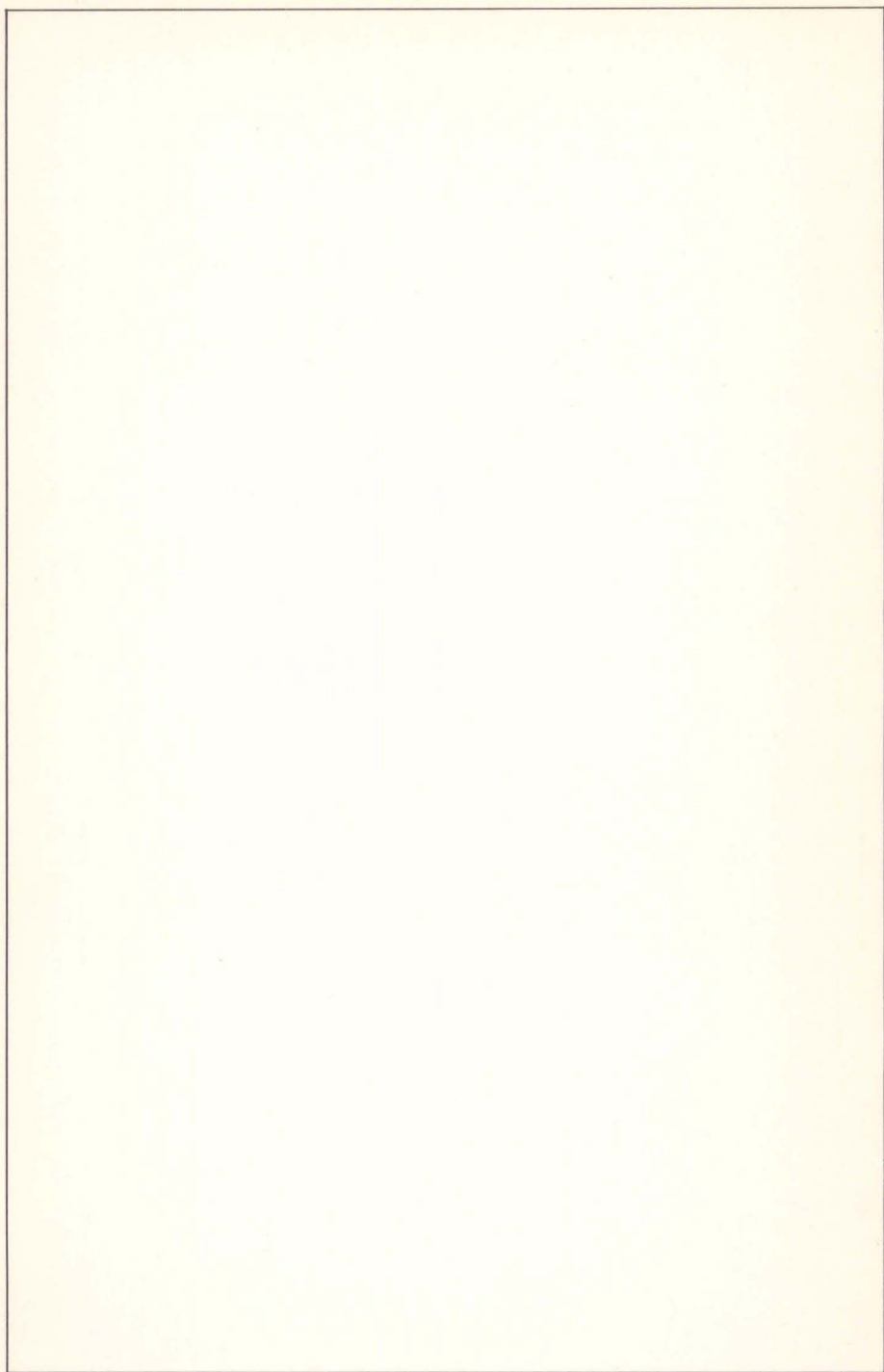
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