

# THE CAPIANO REVIEW



il fallait aller beaucoup plus loin que le jour  
beaucoup plus loin que la nuit ses arômes  
et ses miettes de mica éparpillées sur l'espace  
beaucoup plus loin avec rien dans les mains  
dans le bruit le mouvement la fureur parfaite  
savoir ce qui s'irise au bout des doigts  
dire que l'eau coule toujours et sur chaque geste  
puis fondre ses veines et ses noeuds de viscères  
entre le plomb et l'or successifs des heures

one had to go much further than day  
much further than night and its aromas  
its mica crumbs scattered over space  
much further with nothing in one's hands  
nothing in the noise the movement the perfect fury  
to know what becomes iridescent at the fingertips  
to say that water always flows and over every gesture  
and then melt one's veins and visceral knots  
between the lead and gold layers of time

—MICHEL BEAULIEU (1942-1985)  
*Charmes de la Fureur*. Trans. Arlette  
Francière

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*The Capilano Review is published four times a year from Capilano College, 2055 Purcell Way, North Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.*

*We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of The Canada Council, the Capilano College Humanities Division, the Capilano College Student Society, the Government of British Columbia through the B.C. Cultural Fund and Lottery revenues.*

*The Capilano Review is a member of the Canadian Periodical Publishers' Association and COSMEP. Microfilm editions and reprints are available from University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

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*Printed in Victoria, British Columbia, by Morriss Printing Company Ltd.*

*Second Class Registration Number 4593*

*ISSN 0315-3754*

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Number 36

1985

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John Newlove/  
SYLLABLES V/A SANSKRIT

A stranger sings in the village at night:  
listening to the heavy sound of clouds:  
black in a sullen sky: tears in his eyes:  
he sings a song of his loneliness: his longing.

The listeners to those nearby sounds know  
how like death distance from a lover is:  
how like death: even pride is forgotten:  
they too even refuse to say goodbye to it.

Black smoke from a dirty fire:  
these clouds: covering the whole  
sky: and the fresh thick grass is  
a dark mat on the earth: it  
is the time for love: when those  
who are alone must sing their  
songs softly: only to death.

Alone in her husband's house she hears  
from far away the slow warm spring  
vibrating sound of black bees  
moving among the birds—  
tremulous music  
of love. She hears  
shyly, so  
shyly  
longs  
:

Through tears she saw the lovely  
masses of clouds  
grouping in a dark sky: "Love,  
if you leave me  
now . . ." she said: holding me: her  
legs moving: words  
turn away helplessly from  
what she did then.



Like a shy woman showing:  
for the first time: in love: her thighs:  
the sandy beds of autumn rivers.

## Michael Kenyon / KEYPUNCH

My friend Naomi Frechette rents the lower floor of a tumbledown mansion near the Bay Street Bridge. If it were not for the unclipped laurel hedge she would have a fine view of Selkirk Water beyond the Bamfield Park treetops. Her place is so dark that she often gets claustrophobia. Sometimes halfway through cooking breakfast she has to quickly leave the house. I've told her she should try living on the seventeenth floor of a Calgary highrise.

We met, Naomi and I, at a lecture on pre-menstrual syndrome ("Rhythm & Blues: Causes and Nutritional Support") given by a member of the Victoria Naturopathic Clinic. Besides other interesting facts—such as if a woman can feel good, really good about herself just before her period, she can get high, and very ripe bananas and fresh orange juice and exercise may help—we learned that we were of the same body type, and both addicted to caffeine. We changed our diets for a while, swore off grain, alcohol, sugar, dill pickles, and even coffee. I loaded my fruit basket with nasty black bananas. Though Naomi really does have the most awful menstrual problems, cramps, depression—far worse than any symptoms I can come up with—she insists she's used to dealing with the four or five days of misery each month, says she never thinks about it, avoids calendars like the plague.

Once, several months ago, she woke up and, even before opening her eyes, felt shut in, trapped, desperate. The birds were singing madly. It must've been spring. She dressed as fast as she could and fled the house, letting the door bang in her hurry to escape. That early morning she saw a one-legged pigeon that couldn't fly. A little further on she saw a man carrying a suitcase walking along the path through the wooded park. The floodlights from the saw mill across the water lit the trail between the widely spaced evergreens. The sun had not yet risen: the sky above the mill showed pink-streaked clouds. The man, deep in thought, hadn't seen her—not surprising since she stood in the trees, away from the path. He was handsome, slender, yet well made. Late twenties, a little younger than Naomi. She found him attractive. She especially liked his high forehead and straight flaxen hair. He had an engaging vacant look; he needed a shave; obviously he lived alone.

Every day for a week, Naomi set her alarm for five a.m. and woke feeling apprehensive. She forgot her claustrophobia. She stopped cooking meals for herself. She ate stacks of toast with marmalade, and not only for breakfast. Out at dawn every morning, she told me she was looking for the pigeon. With her hair tightly knotted at the nape of her neck, she waited through seven sunrises in the spiraea thicket beside the path on which she'd seen the bird. By the end of the week she was on familiar terms with a family of wrens living in an old hornet's nest suspended from the branch of a nearby oak. She did not see the pigeon, however, and she did not see the man.

One day, when she was waiting for the bus, she saw him. He was standing across the street in front of a billboard, right between the eyes of a fresh-looking boy of about seven who, just before grinning into the advertiser's camera, had bitten into a pear. On impulse she crossed the street and walked up to the billboard. The pear shone unnaturally green in the child's lowered hands; the man's shirt was unbuttoned to the waist, an affectation she usually found unappealing. She blushed at him, then walked on; a silly smile caught at her lips. She felt excited. His pale, hairless chest, she told me, was almost a girl's. Naomi telephoned me each time she saw the man on the street. She always smiled at him; I could tell from the tone of her voice the times when he reciprocated.

One Sunday evening, at my suggestion, we followed him to see where he lived. I ran up the steps behind him and pretended to read the names on the intercom board. Just inside the glass doors he pulled open his mail locker, shut it again. No key. Empty of course because it was Sunday.

"His name's Brian Hubner!" I called.

I watched Naomi at the bottom of the steps throw her chest forward; shoulders back, she curved her spine, then strolled away, deliberately not looking back at me or at the apartment.

"You owe me a coffee!" I shouted.

Naomi began to wear green clothes almost every day, and she confessed to suddenly finding herself unaccountably affected, often brought to tears, by telecasts of sporting events, especially gymnastics. I felt touched by her confidences, but also embarrassed. I visited her less frequently.

Brian Hubner fascinated me. So utterly self-absorbed, he compelled my attention. It was almost as if I engineered the coincidence that later brought us together.

After his accident, when I visited him in hospital and got to know him well, I felt responsible for what had happened.

"Don't know what you're talking about," Brian said. "It's nothing to do with you. The Indian made a mistake. He should've taken up the slack in the cable before cutting the rope."

"I love you," I said.

He answered with a smirk. "Get out."

"I wish you'd bled to death," I shouted. "By the way, you know who put the broken glass in your mailbox, don't you? Not your slut in Vancouver. You need me, Brian. I understand you. You're in trouble, Brian. You misinterpret the world." A nurse at the open ward door looked on disapprovingly. I could tell she was steeling herself to interfere. "You can't just ditch me, Brian, you don't want to. We're stuck with each other."

"Just get out," he said. "You make me sick. You're like a lost dog."

Nearly every morning Brian would make espresso, drinking the coffee from the Marilyn Monroe cup. At night, he'd fill the cup with ice cream and, using a tiny silver spoon, eat the dessert very slowly. He even insisted on having the cup with him in hospital. I've accused him of being superstitious, but really I like to think of him continuing these rituals.

I imagine Brian pursing his lips to softly whistle; the eerie wind-sound frightens him: he believes he's overheard by someone. He turns his back on the thin woman absurdly posturing on the sidewalk outside his window, stares into the pink-and-mustard-patterned cup before tipping it to his mouth. As he drains the melted ice cream, he catches a glimpse of the black spot on the cup bottom, spins the cup so that the spot appears in the reflection of his right cheek, slightly below the level of his lips. "Marilyn," he sighs. "You and me."

In hospital, Brian talked about when he left Vancouver, about the first morning in his new place in Victoria, drinking coffee from the Marilyn Monroe cup, his belongings in cardboard boxes piled around him; only the cup, theapedeck, the espresso maker had been unpacked. His apartment was strange, magic, filled with the sound of rain.



He opened his cases, lifted the instruments in turn, wiped any smudges from the brass and silver, and named each horn before gently replacing it. He described to me how when the music stopped and the tapedeck switched off, he sat among his boxes and looked at a fly on the window frame. How he toured in silence the bedroom, the bathroom, the livingroom, the kitchen, noting an occasional dent in the plaster walls. How he curled up on the bedroom floor between the wall and a large tea crate full of linen. "It was obvious," he told me, "it was clear that I couldn't play a note."

Walking into town that afternoon he came upon numerous men, some in business suits, bending over, scurrying on, bending over again. Apparently, a truck containing hundreds, probably thousands, of keypunch cards had overturned on the Bay Street Bridge. Cards were floating out with the tide toward the Johnson Street Bridge. The intersection of Bay and Tyee looked as if it were under an off-white, two-dimensional version of snow.

"Each flake different," he muttered as I closed the drapes and soothed his arms under the covers of the hospital bed.

"Waking up in the new place was easy," he explained. "But after I'd vacuumed the carpets, put everything in place—I'd get nervous. I'd take out my alto flute, and my bowels would surge. Flip-flop. A physical reaction! I'd pack away the flute above the closet in the bedroom. I'd lie down on the floor and listen to a tape of myself. 'Happy talkin' talkin' happy talk, talk about things you like to do.' Know the song? Soprano sax improv. 'You gotta have a dream, if you don't have a dream, how you gonna have a dream come true?' I had an affair with my best friend's wife. Crazy! The saxophonist beds down with the percussionist-wife of the guitarist: the band dissolves. Natural progression. I don't blame Gwen for leaving me."

"Tell me about Gwen," I said.

"Not even the bassist will talk to me now," Brian said.

"Did you know her long?"

"In Vancouver," he nodded. "In Victoria I felt quite free." He lay stiff in bed, eyes closed tight. "I'd sit on the toilet so's not to splash. Sometimes there was a spider in the bathtub and I'd talk to the spider. Howdy, spider. And of course the nights passed as nights pass in a strange place. You know. The fridge whirs on and rattles off, the floors creak..."

Brian was asleep, snoring horribly. I sat still beside the bed. Imagined the floors of his empty apartment creaking, still adjusting to the furniture they supported. Imagined the air shifting with stealth under closed doors, through loose-fitting casements, spinning through the hole in the wall behind the flute case on top of the bedroom closet. Brian stopped snoring to murmur an emphatic "Nope," then resumed the cacophonous racket, which I could hear long after I left the ward, long after I reached home.

And, in those days before we met, while Brian opened sleepy eyes on his new surroundings, Naomi would be making tea for one of her charity cases. The pigeon she'd been concerned about was dead. It lay, let's say, buried in garbage at the municipal dump; crows pecked at offal a few feet above its quiet head. And, taking long strides through a tired residential district near the Bay Bridge, a blonde woman with a square chin and a rather squat body would be thinking about sliced bread. This was Marilyn. This was me. A waitress for the summer, I wore flat shoes. I still wear flat shoes. I knew that day I'd deliver to various tables a great many precut slices of white bread enclosing various repulsive fillings, and the knowledge depressed me.

The neighbourhood wore its Monday clothes. Women pushed perambulators. Women sat on steps. They chatted. They wiggled their chubby toes and watched dogs trot by. I could have torn my hair out. It's the starlings, finches, blackbirds, crows, sparrows and robins who arrange the morning's parts: in warm late spring men are desultory or absent, the women just bored or silly, or bored silly. The birds, by complex interweaving of song and flight, keep the machine humming. Click: minute claws on a fence, like pins to a magnet. I want to be in love. I hate the idea. Conventional. I quicken my pace, stare down the man looking at me; I come to a standstill and, with stretched index finger, viciously stab the WALK button. A retarded man flails past, is assisted to the other side of the street by a thin woman in green. Naomi smiles briefly at me. I pretend not to notice. The man keeps moaning. "Where are you taking me? Where are you taking me?" And Naomi repeats, "Across the street. Just across the street." I grin. Yes. The next moment I'm running. All the aphid-ridden buds on all the rose bushes in all the yards shake their heads at me.

Often, on my walk to the cafe in the morning, I saw Naomi's retarded guy. When carefully guided by her, he looked haggard and distressed, sadly manic. But sometimes I saw him alone and he wore a beatific grin. Dressed in a heavy plaid shirt and an old sports jacket, he'd stagger along the sidewalk waving his arms like a possessed windmill. Pedestrians gave him a wide berth. I wanted him to understand that I'd noticed him. I wanted to encourage his wheeling gestures. I wondered if Naomi chose his clothes. How *effective* people seem when they're alone! Though I doubt I appeared effective to others. The Marilyn of that time took delight in innuendo-filled days at the trucker's cafe! I played! A free woman can wear anything, laugh at the men attracted. I was learning to feel empty. Oh, I'd get used to loneliness, I'd wind up like the retarded guy, happily trapped in this town, grinning and drooling along the street, turning cartwheels, tra la!

But even he had Naomi. How does that begin?

Most afternoons Brian left the apartment.

His favourite walk was across the bridge to the Tally Ho beer parlour. In the Tally Ho—a working man's bar, minus the stripper—he said he felt a sense of anonymity that enabled him to relax, to sit back and concentrate on each glass cylinder of amber liquid as it left the small round table, tilted a cold rim to the bridge of his nose, touched down seconds later. With every dull thud, he felt himself retreat. "I'd look at my knuckles," he said, "white on the table, and think: I'm all by myself."

For some weeks he rarely ventured out, except to the Tally Ho. Sometimes, on the way, he stopped at Jan's Place or the Red Kettle for a coffee. He began to look forward to seeing the blonde waitress at Jan's Place. When he passed on his drunken journey home the cafe was always closed, its windows dark. He'd weave on sulkily across the bridge, along the tracks and through the park's deep shadows.

One morning he found in his mailbox a letter from Gwen and a piece of broken glass, the label side of a smashed beer bottle. I'd planted the glass very late the night before. New moon. Hush!

"A long letter. Broken glass." He groaned.

Two nurses stood smiling at something outside the ward window. They looked peaceful. In control.

"I hate the cold cloying sweetness of ice cream," he said. "But Gwen really loved ice cream. For some reason I kept up the nightly ritual of eating a cupful before bed."

I asked, "What was it like making love to Gwen?"

He described a livingroom, the two of them facing each other, the dog licking clean the empty dishes on the carpet between them. They did not speak or touch or make any movement. Had it been like this?

"Seems like years ago," he said in a far away voice. "Why the hell did she write? Bullshit letter. Such a smooth belly she had, belly like a plate. Those clear eyes of hers watched the whole ugly thing. I had to leave her, you see that? She watched Jenny and me tumble in and out of bed, chase each other around Vancouver like sick calves. Gwen and the guitarist watched me make a fool of myself. What did she send the broken glass for? Hell. I so easily pushed her away."

When Brian was familiar with my schedule at Jan's Place, he arranged his visits to coincide with my coffee breaks. He told me about his Marilyn Monroe cup, his apartment, his saxophones and flute, his favourite walk. Sometimes he met me at the close of my shift. And how did I feel about his attentions? I discovered I'd been waiting.

Summer now, on hot afternoons the home-bound traffic crawled toward the bridge and we usually had to wait to cross Bay Street. We'd waded through dust eddies in the wake of a cement truck to the opposite sidewalk, along Turner Street into the ramshackle industrial district of sawmills and scrapyards. It was so hot that I listened as he pointed out the different businesses.



"At night it's empty here," he told me, "quiet, except for the racket from the mill across Selkirk Water."

"Uh-huh," I said.

"I live over there, just across the Gorge. That bush is Bamfield Park. I live on the other side of the trees. Been there since the beginning of March."

"Uh-huh," I said. Why was I not losing interest in this man? "See that guy?"

"Crazy guy," said Brian. "Where'd he come from?"

"Oh, he's always walking around."

The man stopped waving his arms to watch us approach. His grin faded and his arms fell to his sides as we got closer. Brian stuck his thumbs in his back pockets, then pulled them out. The man gestured toward me, then at Brian; he offered a hand. Brian shifted his feet. The man looked warily at me, then spoke, shrugging his shoulders madly. When Brian touched his palm, he reached with both hands to enclose Brian's hand in a tight double grip. Brian pulled free, made a show of straightening his curled fingers; the man threw back his head and laughed. Brian grimaced at me.

"Brian? Can we ask him along? Invite him for a beer?"

"OK."

When Brian asked him his name, the guy said, "Ah!"

"Al?" I said.

"Ah!" he agreed.

"Hey, Al! Listen to that," said Brian. "The sawmill. Listen to the squeals when the saw goes through the wood—brutal, huh?"

"Brutal."

"How long have you been in Victoria, Al?" I asked.

"Brutal."

"I haven't been here long," Brian said. "I'm from Vancouver. Marilyn here's from Calgary. Al, why don't you ask Marilyn how long she'll stay?"

"How long?"

"I don't know," I said. "For the summer. I don't know. D'you live close by, Al?"

"Summer's fun . . . kids and . . . bathing beauties . . . and . . ."

In the beer parlour Al looked worried. He sat forward in his chair and studied the tablecloth. Glanced up and around, then quickly down at his big hands resting on the red cloth. "I gotta get

back," he muttered. "Na-omi be watching. She says I annoy her. Gotta get back." But he made no move to leave. He drank the beer and began to watch our faces across the table.

"Men in your life?" Brian asked me.

"No."

"What about you, Al, you married or anything?"

"Me? Married? Nah. Me?"

"I play the saxophone, Al. You know. Saxophone. Nice curves. Bet you'd like the saxophone."

"Saxo. Phone. Mary. Lyn. Marlyn. Lyn."

"Brian, don't tease him, OK?"

As the evening progressed, the beer parlour filled. The patrons eyed Al. He kept his face and hands as still as he was able, tried not to get excited.

Brian yelled out, "Hi, Al. How you doing?"

"Fine. Na-omi, she's, she's good! I gotta get back. I gotta go."

"That's all right, Al." Brian said. "That's good." He touched my elbow. "With Gwen and me I used to forget we were people, just people on the street. I closed right down till I could only see her. When I finally noticed someone else it was a shock. Ah... I think she hates men, really hates men. She always said she liked the woman in me. She used to make me sit to pee so I wouldn't splash. And I think she's maybe a little unbalanced now. Know what she sent me in the mail? A chunk of broken glass. Jesus Christ. Thing is, I've not been playing at all since I moved to The Island. I should be blowing scales at least. Maybe I'll lose my lip. It's funny, I'm not uptight about it. If you decide you can't do a thing, that there's no point in trying, then you can't disappoint yourself, can you? I've been thinking about you a lot since we met. Like we're on the same wavelength, you know?"

"You want to make love to me," I said.

"I feel safe with you. I feel safe. You feel safe, Al?"

"Yup."

"See? We're just one happy family."

"Al?" I said. "D'you like your beer?"

"Yup. Me? Yup!"

"I remember," I said, "once in Manzanillo, in Mexico—I was sailing back from Panama with friends— waking up very early to go for a walk by myself through the town. I found a mutilated goat tied up beside a grave in the Indian burial ground. It really horrified me. I suddenly felt very American, out of my element, incomplete, like I'd lost my sight or my hearing. I wanted to touch the goat, but I couldn't make myself. I decided no one should feel as safe as I did, no one should be that smug, complacent."

And this, I know now, was the turning point in my relationship with Brian. If I had not told him my Mexico story, I would not have slept with him, I would not love him. Now I see through that memory, as through clean glass, Brian's accident.

"I like you," I told Brian in the lobby. "I'll stay with you tonight. I brought my toothbrush."

He shook his head, amused.

"Beauty," Al said, brushing fingers up and down his ribcage. He was looking at my legs.

In the cab, Al fell asleep. Brian touched my neck. "You like the guy, don't you?"

I smiled at him.

He sang, "All the girls have gone, I just wanted one, I just wan-ted—"

"The most beautiful time in Mexico," I said as we were crossing the bridge, "is after it rains, and the lizards dart, rain-speckled silver, for a patch of sun."

I made my hands whisk along the back of the driver's seat away from each other.

The pigeon had stopped being pigeon: the feathers, locked in filth, some straight and kept intact by the weight of trash, waited for some future lengthy flight.

I wanted to know all about Brian Hubner, yet, perversely, I regretted his confidences, his tentative glances, his shy questions. No longer so self-contained, he was interested, interested in me.

I decided I must stop regarding myself as an object. Brian, I thought, expected me to justify his wilful potency by objectifying myself. Although I allowed myself to enjoy his lust, the attitudes behind it appalled me. I must not allow him to feel safe.

We argued. We grew sickeningly close.

"What d'you mean *male role*?" he exploded. "People are people, right?"

I don't believe in God, but when I received the call Saturday morning that Brian had been admitted to hospital and would possibly lose his foot, I experienced a sudden fracturing of my world. I was aware of the texture, a thickness in the air I'd not noticed before. It started on the bleak sunny Friday; Saturday morning shattered the dark with a light that hurt my soul. I can still smell, still taste that light. Antiseptic. Bloody.

Friday morning Brian and I opened the door to Felice's, a plush Italian restaurant on the tourist strip. Brian stood at the cash register, blinking into the sun-filled lower room. I tugged at his elbow. The owner, alone at a table by the huge rear windows, beckoned us down the stairs. I introduced the men, they sat facing each other. I walked around, looking at the pictures on the wall, listening to the conversation.

"I liked your tape. You do a lot of Real Book stuff. I caught you at the Jazz Bar last week. That place's not good for your reputation. Take my word. Too many drunk Indians, too much illegal drinking. The cops will close it down before long. And, if I were you I'd ditch the pianist—guy's lousy."

Brian sat stiffly on the edge of his chair, faced the windows, the harbour. The owner turned three-quarter profile to look at the brilliant water; waves of light adjusted his features, changing his expression subtly and constantly. He gripped a pipe in his teeth, lowered a match to the tobacco, sucking hard at the smoke. I'd told Brian I'd only met the man once, that he was really a friend of Naomi's. Brian slouched. I watched a thin spire rise straight from the pipe to whirl and dissolve in the higher draughts. The owner's lips closed; two coils escaped his nostrils. I could tell he thought he was doing me a big favour. As if alone in the room, the two men sat very still.

"Three nights a week, guaranteed," the owner sighed. "The rest of the summer. Just you and the bass player."

The Coho ferry pointed its bow toward the open water; pursued by lazy mute gulls, it steamed across the harbour. A sailboat bounced through the wash.

"Axe the guy on the piano," the owner repeated. "Eighty bucks a night each. Deal?"



Brian looked now at the room, but not at me, now through the windows, now at the owner, now at the room, now through the windows. . . . The pipe sat dead between the other's fingers and the table.

"I've never felt more desolate," Brian told me when we left. He said he was moving through a kind of black space. "You sleep with that guy?"

I shrugged. Angry.

"What the hell do I care?" Brian started across Wharf Street. I followed, aware of how many brightly clothed tourists with sweaty faces were sauntering aimlessly this way and that.

We met Al on the street and Brian invited him to eat donuts and pistachio ice cream with us at his apartment.

After changing into jeans and a torn sweater, Brian dished out the ice cream, plugged in the kettle, then sat on the floor in the shaft of sunlight that filled the doorway between the kitchen and living areas. He picked up his cup, put it down, squinted at me, and began addressing Al in a low voice.

"Women think they're terrorists, Al, think they're working for a bloody cause. They can be as false, as destructive, play as many games as they like, because they're fighting for freedom, to overcome ~~the~~ system. They believe in a new order."

Al's spoon stopped in the ice cream; he looked at the floor.

Brian went on. "They don't know we're all people, stuck in this mess together. It's not a war."

"Leave him alone, Brian," I said. "He doesn't understand. Come on, Al, I'll take you home, OK?"

"And you"—Brian stood up and began to yell—"you say, you say: 'Your attitude's not *appropriate* at the moment. Women are more *important* than men. I don't want to *sleep* with you any more. You don't know how to *treat* me as a woman. You've a lot of *learning* to do. Rethink your male *role*.' I've got a lot of learning to do! You don't know your ass from a teakettle! Christ!"

"Christ," Al repeated in a faint voice. "I feel sick. I gotta go. Thanks for the ice cream. Ah. I don't want any more. Ah."

Brian was running a bath when Al and I left. We entered a lovely summer evening. Brian threw the plastic duck soap dish I'd given him out of the bathroom window. It clattered on the apartment driveway at our feet.

Poor idiot.

Later, at Naomi's, I watched her iron a pale green rayon shirt in the fading daylight. I said I thought she should turn on the ceiling lamp. She moistened a finger, touched it to the stainless steel before resting the iron on its base, and reached over toward the switch. Between the moment she nudged the ironing board and the moment the iron crashed to the tile floor, I wondered if she ever thought of the pale man with the unbuttoned shirt.

"So you saw Al," she said. "How was he?"

"Fine. All right, I suppose. He sure talks a lot about you. Did you give him your make-up bag?"

"No," she laughed. "So that's where it is. I've been looking everywhere."

Now I think of it, Naomi and Al were the mediators of that day and the next. Angels, they traded identities; with incredible guile and gentleness they arranged the light and shadows around Brian and me until we could not take a wrong step on our converging paths.

Brian lay down to rest at nine-thirty; his gig at the Jazz Bar began at one a.m. A disturbed sleep, he kept waking every half-hour. When at last he heard the apartment door open, he realized that was the sound he'd been expecting.

"Marilyn? I'm in bed."

A tall woman wearing a green gown stood in the bedroom doorway. Brian felt a cold hand brush his chest. He gasped. Nonsense. The figure had not moved.

"Al? What the hell are you doing? You scared the shit out of me!"

The man in the doorway had on a woman's dressing gown; he was shivering. His powdered cheeks shone; in places the make-up had streaked. His smeared lips slowly moved, blurred.

"Hey!" Brian said, struggling from the bed. "You can't just break into a guy's place. Christ, Al. What's going on?"

Al hung his head, played with the green sash at his waist. "The door was open," he whispered.

"So you walk right in? Just like that?"

"Yes. Please. Oh."

Brian led him into the kitchen, made him sit down at the table. "Let me wake up a bit. What's happened to you?"

"Where's Mar Lyn?"

"Not here. Give it up. I'm not her keeper."

"Yes." Al accepted the bowl and spoon Brian handed him. Lay the spoon gently on the table and folded his arms. "Brian, I don't feel so good, Brian. I'm scared."

"Eat up." Brian wrapped a blanket around Al's shoulders. "You look terrible. Now pay attention. You can stay here if you like, but I've got to go. You take those clothes off and get some sleep and I'll be back in the morning. OK? You're safe here. Finish off the ice cream if you want. Wash your face. And cheer up!"

Brian took a cab to the Jazz Bar.

Midway through his first set he caught my eye. He'd already drunk more than he should and he blew rapid, jarring phrases around the room, screaming into his horn, reaching high into the third octave. The set ended before he'd controlled his fury.

He walked from the stage directly to embrace me.

"Passion!" he hissed. "The breath of excitement!" And he went on to tell me about Al, but was careful not to lose his exultant mood.

I tasted cheap rye, like paraffin wax, on his lips as I kissed him. A group of American sailors from the lighted EXIT looked on; the bouncer raised his eyebrows in our direction. Laughing back, I kissed Brian again: a goodbye kiss, clumsy. "Time for your next set," I said brightly.

He stumbled a little when I let him go. "I met women like you before!" he yelled. "I left two in Vancouver. What the hell! You're all adventurers. And me, I'm drinking whiskey and playing good American jazz. Tell me"—he grabbed one of the sailors—"you ever hear of a great Canadian horn man? Yeah? No? Listen. I'm blowing to the Indians and they don't care. Look at me, man. Yessir! Here I am playing with the Indians!"

After the cab ride home, I walked the line of streetlights to the twenty-four-hour Shell on the corner, bought change from the cashier for the cigarette machine. Although a slight guilty feeling, like too much coffee, turned my stomach acid, I felt very calm. In control. The pools of light on the bays around the pumps lost definition as the sky brightened. Turning from the cigarette machine's illuminated Niagara Falls, I recognized the black sailor who'd just come in to ask what time the buses started running.

"D'you know when the buses run? I gotta get to the ship before eight or I'm dead."

"I've got a schedule at home."

As we walked to my apartment the birds were singing.

"I love Canadian women, so friendly! How old are you? I figure around, say, thirty-one? I'm nineteen, but I guess you like that, huh? You lived in Victoria all your life?"



I shook my head. The morning seemed to be smouldering. A black filament spun from the sailor to outline each object as I turned my head from side to side, amazed. I allowed his hand around my waist.

"Hey, that dude you were kissing at the bar, the sax player—"

"He's crazy."

"He's pretty damned hot is what he is! He your old man?"

"No."

"Drinks too much, I guess. But he's hot. Say that much. You know I followed your cab, shadowed you to the gas station—hey, you're too smart to get it on with a loser...."

Brian and I often fight; we don't get along; I despise him. I'm not looking forward to the day—soon now—he'll get out of hospital. But we're bound irrevocably. I believe that people create their own lives, and I've bound myself to him. Our moments link together. I begin him. He ends me. *Passion*. He speaks the word not with his tongue. Some fabric like metaphysical flypaper fixes us. I recognize my fear, his boredom, as by-products. Watch the sparks fly.

That day of bonding happened. I insist: I was not there in the morning, in the park. My foot is not growing numb. This meshing fills my senses with a breathless music.

Brian walked the railway tracks home after the gig, under the Bay Street Bridge to the path through the trees lining the inlet, rather than over the bridge and along the streets. The sun had not yet appeared, but the sky was already white. Twice he tripped over a tie; the second time he set his tenor case between the rails and sat down to watch the water ripple past the little island just east of the rail trestle. Log booms skirted the old sawmill buildings across the Gorge; one barge waited at dock, half-full of sawdust, for the machines to start up again, for the spout to begin spewing its yellow shavings.... Sensing himself nodding off, Brian dragged his horn up and reeled on along the tracks; a family of quail spun wailing from the bushes at his feet. A motor launch kept him company as he crossed the disused freight yards: he caught sight of it intermittently as he followed the winding path into the eastern

reaches of Bamfield Park. Then, as he turned a bend, the launch pointed its bow toward shore and he made out the name. *Phoenix*. A dog lay asleep on a shelf against the wheelhouse glass; beyond the dog, a man and a boy stared intently forward. Brian followed their gaze. Where the path ahead dipped to within a few feet of the Gorge, a man was crouched, his chest and shoulders twisted to one side, face set in a grimace. A vessel was half-submerged at the inlet edge. The Indian, dressed in jean jacket and soiled striped pants, was adjusting a come-a-long, increasing the tension of a heavy cable connected at one end to the sunken vessel's prow, at the other to a tree alongside the path. Brian would have to step over the cable.

"Your boat?"

The Indian lifted his eyes. "Gillnetter."

"I guess you'll wait for the tide to fall?"

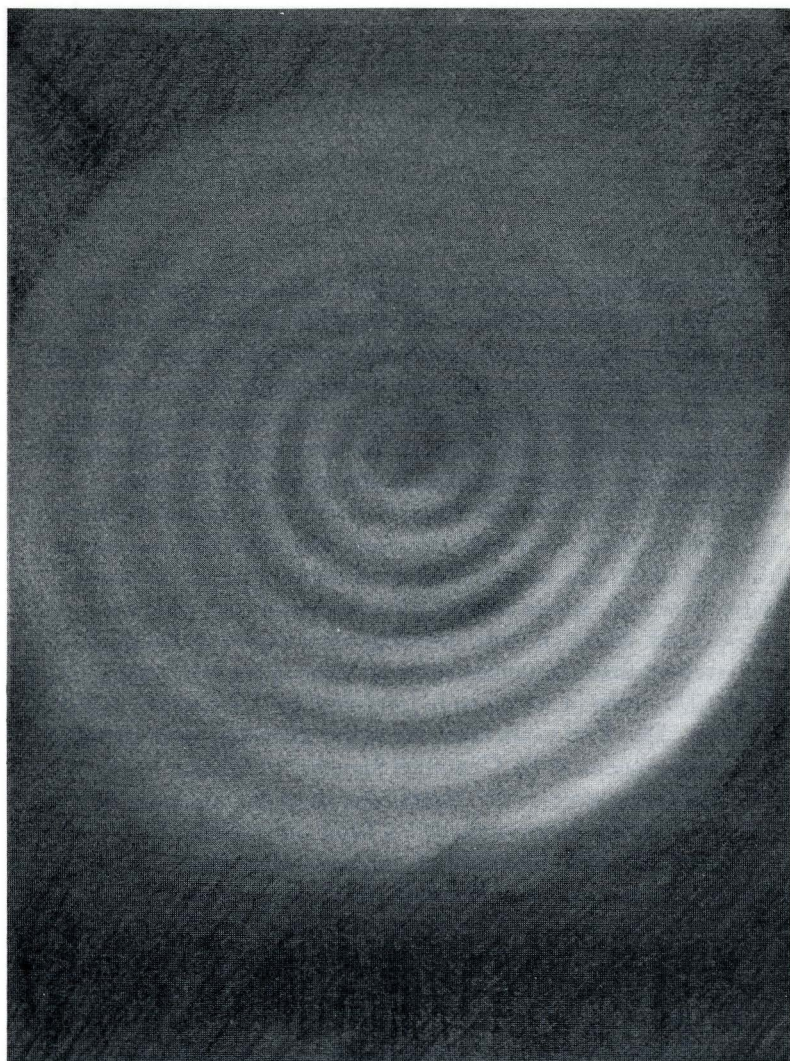
"Fix her this afternoon. Float her next flood."

Brian nodded. As he straddled the cable, he glanced at the grounded boat, made out the name. *Marilyn*. Looking sidelong at the Indian, he realized that although he'd read the situation correctly, some of the details established in his mind differed from the actual details of the scene. The line over which he stepped was not heavy wire but polypropylene rope—frayed and dirty yellow. But he had no sooner cancelled the cable from his observations than a real cable occurred. This cable lay slack on the ground, formed two casual loops on the path, then disappeared into the water to surface at the tilted bow to which, like the rope, it was affixed. The cable, not the rope, was attached to the come-a-long, whereas the taut rope, obviously a provisional link, was simply fastened around the tree trunk. The Indian held a knife in his left hand.

Brian could not avoid setting his foot into one of the cable loops; the Indian had just finished slashing the rope. When the man yelled, the *Marilyn* suddenly lurched backward, slid a few feet into deeper water, and stopped. Brian felt a crackle of pain circle his right ankle, mistook the Indian's shout for laughter, the pain for his answering hoot. They shared a great joke. The cable loops had disappeared, the wire dug into the red ankle. The dog in the launch laughed, while father and son came chugging closer, faces set and grim; Brian, on his knees, allowed the hot circle to rise and expand, filling his whole body. The Indian screamed in his ear. The Gorge and the trees began to revolve in a ponderous fashion; soft dirt crammed under his fingernails; a peculiar metallic smell permeated the cool air. Wheeling gulls assisted the pirouetting landscape as *Marilyn* shuddered further onto her side. Wrens ticked nervously through the mesh of leaves. On the path in front of his eyes he saw the glass shard, read each word on the torn beer bottle label; beside the glass, the pink-and-mustard cup. He dragged himself forward to peer inside: a strange insect floated on cold coffee. His fingertips ached from punching the pearl-faced keys. He heard the wild riff with which he'd ended his last set.

One other thing. As Brian relived this scene for me, I saw with absolute clarity, above the path, in the gnarled oaks, the retreating backs of Naomi Frechette and Al. The two were holding hands and Al's inquisitive head turned this way and that. Naomi wore a green housecoat. One sleeve of Al's plaid shirt was rolled up, the other flapped from his loose wrist. Around them, the wood, the grass, the criss-cross streets enclosing the park and the Gorge, sparkled in early sun.





**Monique Fouquet/  
WALKING THE SOFT EARTH**

In 1976, Monique Fouquet was back in her native Quebec City after four years in Vancouver. On the table in front of her was a transparent windowed envelope that contained feathers she had collected from Vancouver beaches. These simple objects were the basis for her first important drawings: a consideration of things from the real world which through art were endowed with abstract and ambivalent spatial qualities. In the same year Fouquet reduced her reliance on the tangible world abandoning the feathers and concentrating exclusively for some time upon the creation of drawings which can be described as illusions of paper on paper. These drawings explore that which is seen and that which is remembered. Many of these drawings were shown at Fouquet's well received first one-person show at Vancouver Art Gallery in the fall of 1979, some of which were published in *The Capilano Review* (Issue No. 13). Two years later, six larger drawings were presented as an environment at La Chambre Blanche, in Quebec City, anticipating the scale of the biggest drawings she works on now. Number 2 in that series presented a three dimensional box, the first instance of the ultra-dimensional containers that recur in varying scales in Fouquet's recent drawings. In these, the boxes become more than containers in the context they are given. They are rowed and stacked into monuments alongside such similar primal forms as the pyramid, the circle, and the cone. They fly, or they are as firmly rooted as basalt pillars. They are the receptacles for a thousand grass-like strokes which elsewhere in these drawings are bundled into stacks or strewn like hay upon the unseen wind.

Fouquet's October 1985 exhibition at the Contemporary Art Gallery is called *Walking the Soft Earth*. This title is reminiscent of Carlos Castaneda's mysticism, and it invites us to consider the forces of nature. The methods by which these numbered drawings were achieved show that Fouquet is prepared to go through the artistic equivalent of standing in the eye of the hurricane, of walking on quicksand.

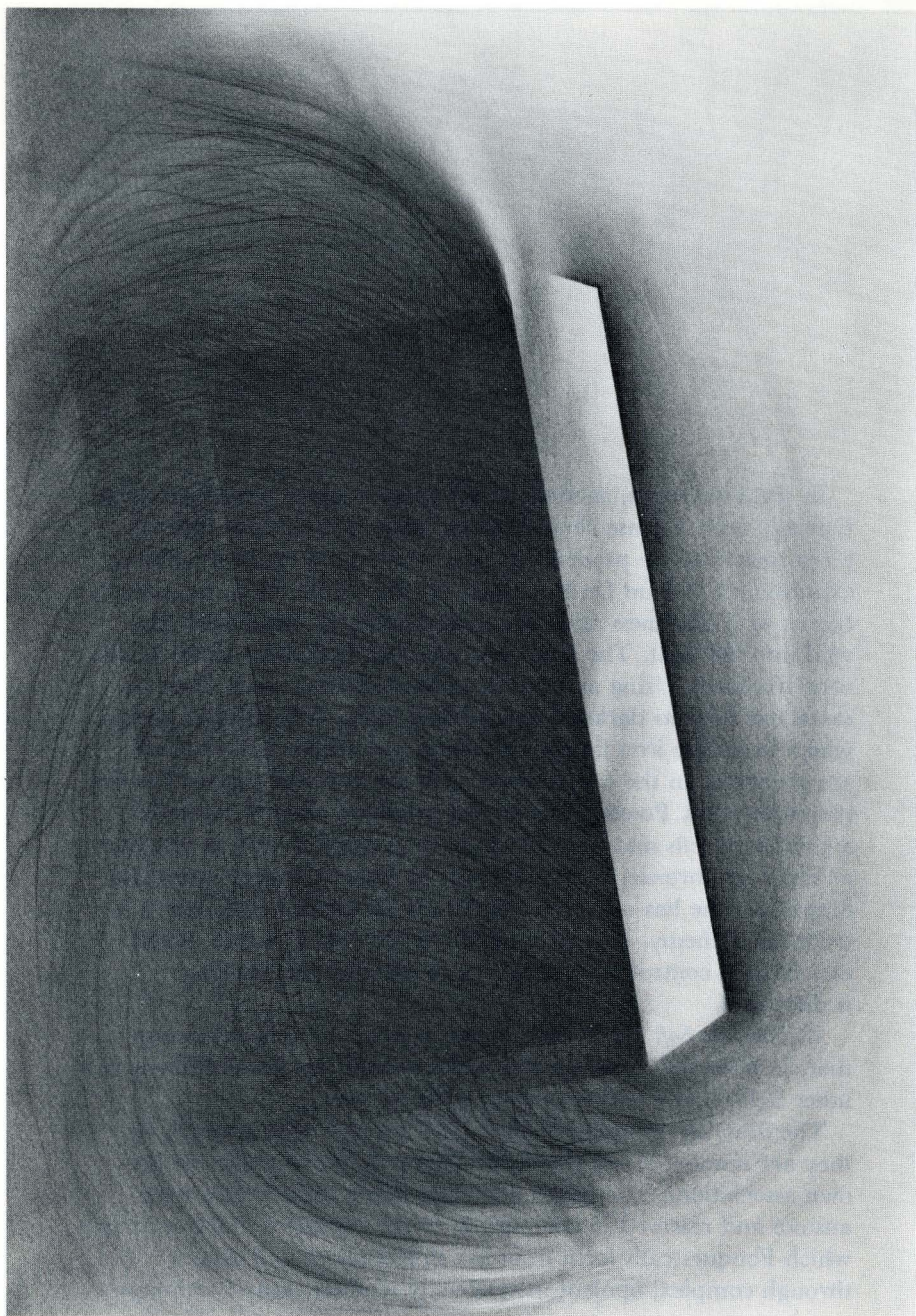


In these drawings, as much is added as is taken away. She starts typically with a dense central, black shape which is put through a rigorous intuitive process similar to that found useful by abstract expressionist Willem De Kooning. But she, unlike him, occasionally begins with blackness and encourages motifs to dance from the void into the light. The large triptych once had as its centre a solid cone-like form. Using an electric eraser and other tools, Fouquet extracted from its darkness flying boxes filled with metallic grasses which bend like iron filings towards or away from forces which are generated in the composition: that are as subtle and real as the magnetic poles. Powdered charcoal, graphite, and the softest of available pencils make her blacks as dark as pitch and as precious as silver and bronze. She is also able to create cloud or smokelike diaphony. She has respect for white. As she immerses herself in a technical alchemy, she opens herself to the risk of failure. If she cannot gain control of the imagery in the end, the drawing is discarded.

*Walking the Soft Earth*, then, made public only those drawings that, in Fouquet's opinion, the public should see, could embody her inner light. Some of these are reproduced here.

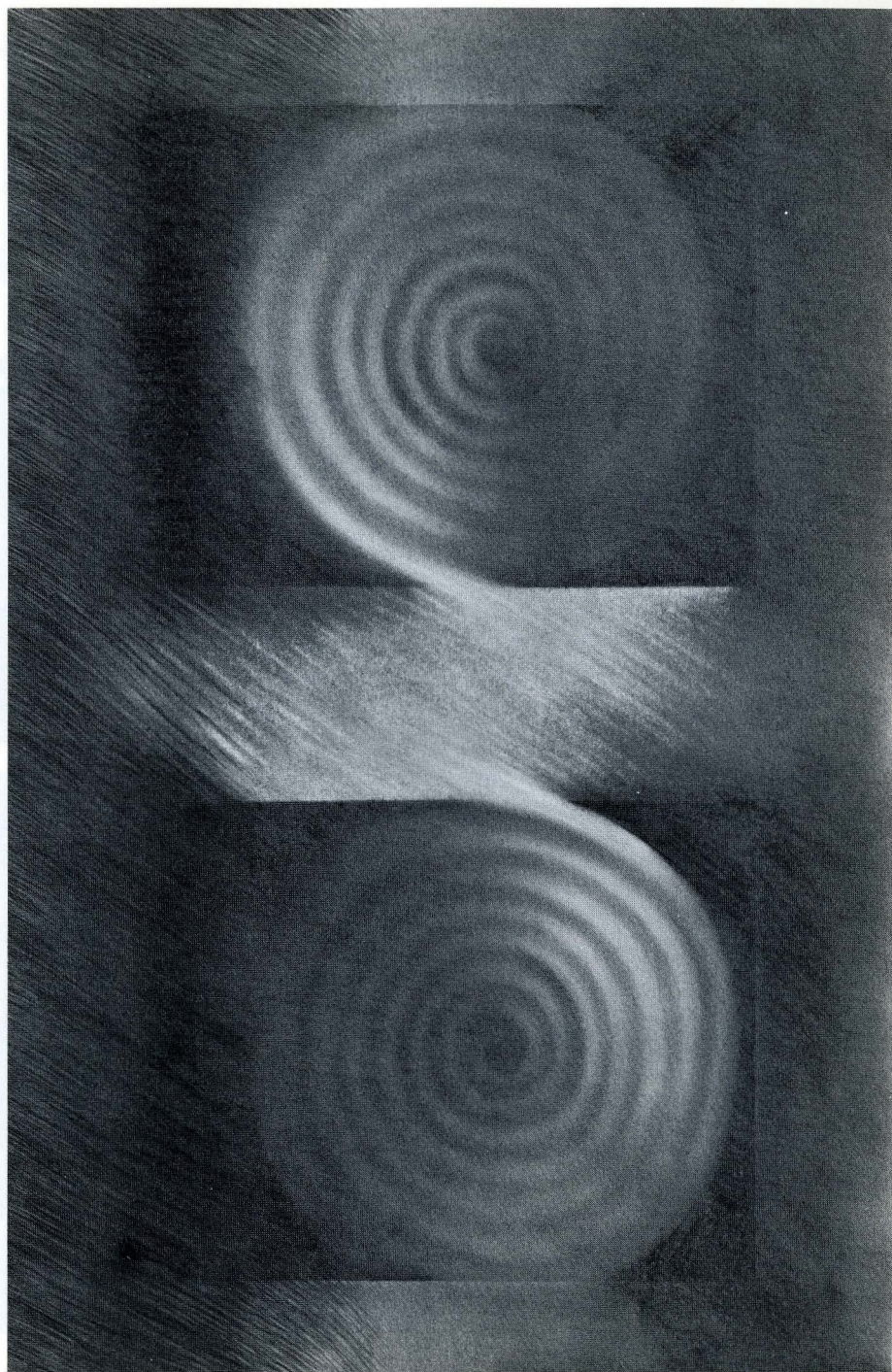
The drawings completed since 1981 are rich with allusion. As they are numbered not titled, the viewer is free to make his/her own associations. The paper drawings which came before were austere and reserved in comparison to the explosive, emotive images which Fouquet calls forth from her subconscious and shapes through complex, opulent, occasionally semi-automatic techniques.

ANN ROSENBERG



IVAN ROSENFELD





















## IMAGES

*No. 79*, 1984, graphite on paper, 55.88 x 76.2 cm. *photography*: Robert Keziere

*No. 81*, 1984, graphite on paper, 55.88 x 76.2 cm. *photography*: Robert Keziere

*No. 90*, 1985, charcoal and graphite on paper, 320.1 x 251.5 cm. *photography*: Robert Keziere

*No. 89*, 1985, charcoal and graphite on paper, 167.5 x 106.7 cm. *photography*: Robert Keziere

*No. 88*, 1985 charcoal and graphite on paper, 167.5 x 106.7 cm. *photography*: Robert Keziere



## Noel Hudson / RECENT MUSIC

I don't know just exactly why I let him in. He had what sounded like a password, maybe that was it. I cracked open the apartment door enough to get a look at him, and he bent forward his ice axe of a nose and said, conspiratorially, "Carpets."

"Carpets," I whispered.

It wasn't his looks. I didn't like the looks of him. He was big, with huge sloping shoulders and a massive bovine chest, and his silver coveralls were too small, pulling up short of his red nylon socks. There were a full two inches or more of smooth, hairless white flesh gaping between his pant legs and those socks. Across a single breast pocket the name "Wendell" was embroidered in a shaky, home-sewn script.

"Carpets," I whispered again, watching my hands unlatch the protector chain and fling the door open wide.

He towed a knee-high chrome unit behind him as he entered. It had a see-through amber bubble on top and a long black hose by which he pulled the thing around.

"No halls," he said.

"Okay."

"No bedrooms. Guy'll be along tomorrow with a smaller machine for those. Saugenmeister 410. You ever seen one?"

"No."

"Incredible little machines."

I just kept quiet.

"Anyway," Wendell continued, "He'll be along tomorrow early."

"I see."

"Elvin."

"Pardon?"

"Guy's name's Elvin."

"Fine," I said.

"Just so you know."

He appeared to be looking directly to the left of my head as he spoke, so I stepped to one side, allowing him full view of the livingroom carpet. There were a few mysterious stains and it was slightly faded, but it was free of burn holes and paint spots. I felt almost proud. He chewed at a corner of his mouth and closed his eyes tight a few seconds.

We moved in a week early because the previous tenants had already moved out, and we managed to persuade the landlord, saying how we wanted to get in and settled as soon as possible, and how the people who bought our house weren't scheduled to take possession yet but had nonetheless begun putting up new siding. As a result, we'd been forced to endure constant interruptions by apartment maintenance people: a plumber, a woman with light-bulbs, a window cleaner, a man to take crayon marks off one of the bedroom walls. "Kids," he'd said, like it was detective work.

That was three weeks ago. We assumed they'd all come who were coming. We'd positioned the furniture how we wanted it and restocked the end tables with their collected miscellany.

"All gotta be moved," pronounced Wendell, coming out of his meditation.

"Couldn't we just shift it to one side?" I asked.

Negative.

As he dragged his carpet shampooer into the kitchen, something leaped into my peripheral vision. Eleanor. Eleanor stood nude in the hallway, half-asleep. Stood there like a wrinkled flamingo, rubbing her right foot against the inside of her left leg. I signalled exaggeratedly for her to get back in the bedroom. She held up a toothbrush.

"Now now now now now," said Wendell, surveying the room.

Her modest breasts went ways of their own as she pivoted and slipped back into safety.

Wendell and I commenced shoving furniture into the hallway. It occurred to me to suggest to Eleanor that she get dressed and come out instead of allowing herself to be blockaded in the bedroom for a couple of hours, but our visitor placed the heavy love seat squarely in front of the door, then stacked a coffee table and footstool on top of that.

"Plug," he said, hands on his big hips and eyes scouting the baseboard of the empty room with a slow careful sweep.

"There," I said, pointing to an outlet beneath the livingroom window and partially hidden by the curtains.

He handed me the plug and began filling his old chrome shampooer with blue fluid from a root beer jug, absently dripping on his foot.

The machine fired up, emitting a high rotating whine, as I plugged it in. He threw himself backwards and slapped off the toggle switch.

"Loud," he said, grinning.

I fully expected Eleanor to be pounding down the bedroom door, wanting to know what precisely was going on. But she wasn't. All that furniture was probably soundproofing the hallway.

I thought seriously about making myself some breakfast, before I realized I would have to eat standing up. That didn't seem healthy. I couldn't think of anyone who ate standing up. Instead, I leaned against a stack of dining chairs and attempted to recreate the image of my sixty-nine-year-old flamingo-imitating wife. A rosy-white blur.

Wendell waltzed around the livingroom in tight steps with his incessantly whirring shampooer, working lather circles into larger lather squares. The overhead light reflecting off his high unlined forehead made him appear to be visibly balding.

"It'll take some time," he said.

"No problem," I replied.

"Forgive the inconvenience."

"That's all right."

"You just go ahead with whatever you normally do."

"I've got plenty of time."

"That a fact?"

"I've nothing planned."

"Your day off, is it?"

"Retired," I said, and watched his facial muscles do a dance. The word still felt strange in my mouth—like I knew it was the correct answer but had no idea what it meant.

"Oh?"

"Afraid so."

"Part of the swelling ranks of mature individuals," said Wendell, staring intensely at the rug. "The country's most wasted resource," he said.

"I thought I'd try it for a year or two," I said.

"Retirement," he said, putting some weight on his machine as he approached a dark spot. "Now this is an area about which I am very curious."

"It's all still new to me," I said.

The low double-window in the diningroom was open, and the growing clamour of cars and people below on Grant Avenue rose to join Wendell's machine. Traffic and voices tuning themselves. Rounded then stammered vowels, hissing and pipping consonants. Blurts. Wheezes. Saxophones.

"Ours is an ungrateful society," the big man confessed.

"Not at all," I said.

"I don't for one minute blame you retirees for being disenchanted with the system. No, I don't."

"I think I'll like it fine."

"Man like yourself—I suspect differently."

"Best to view it as an extended vacation, I think."

"Vacation," said Wendell. "Is that what you think? If you mean being forced to vacate your hard-earned position at a time of peak mental maturity."

"It was my choice," I said.

Wendell stood up straight as his great body would allow and, completely ignoring the rising froth from his stationary machine, said, "*I am* sorry."

His eyebrows floated around his expanse of forehead. He rolled his silver shoulders. "*I am* sorry," he repeated.

Eleanor would have put him back on track, told him to keep to his own side of the fence, but I didn't want to stir him any further.

"A man's daily work must be recognized and appreciated," Wendell explained. "If it isn't, he winds up feeling inadequate, inconsequential, ineffectual. And he gives up. He retires."

"I—" I said.



"I've seen it happen to too many people," he continued. "My own uncle checked himself in and let senium praecox have at him. Now that's voluntary retirement for you."

"Senium praecox?"

"Premature senility. Pick's disease got him, they said."

"I'm sorry to hear that."

"*I'm* sorry," insisted Wendell. "Both as a nephew and as a tithing member of the blessed world community, I'm sorry. If my uncle had enjoyed the occasional scrap of praise while he was working, I truly believe he'd be alive, sane, and toiling his tail off today."

"Perhaps if he'd had a hobby,..." I said.

"Hobbies won't keep a man alive. He was a philatelist, a philumenist, and shrewd as a Philadelphia lawyer where chess was concerned. I say you have to have a purpose. A mission, if you will. A man must have a calling."

Saxophones honked in the window like defensive geese, like offensive tenors. A street sweeper drove slowly by, making his brush-against-cymbal percussion clash with Wendell's shampooer's whirl. Eleanor, my Eleanor. You might be calling to me this moment and I'd not hear a peep.

"Depression," said Wendell.

"Pardon?"

"Depression," he repeated, his back doing a serpentine movement as he returned to serious cleaning, push-pulling the large chrome unit, moving his soap in advanced geometric variations. "Depression is where it generally starts for most retireds. A lowering of overall mood-tone, feelings of dejection, difficulty focusing their thoughts, that sort of thing."

I walked over to the diningroom window not having a clue.

"You and your uncle must have been close," I said, sitting on the windowsill.

The warm wood breathed through my pyjama bottoms. Three stories down and across Grant, a woman was hanging a USED ADULT BOOKS sign in the window of a secondhand clothing and antique shop. She made a couple of leveling adjustments, stepped back, cocked her head to one side, then went off, leaving it hanging crooked. My first thought was to yell to her—yell, above all of this, yell: "It's still out of kilter, my dear!" Then, more realistically, I considered phoning the shop. But the phone was in the bedroom trapped with Eleanor. And if I did call, the woman might think



I spent my time watching her every move from my perch and decide to call the police. Or she might get self-conscious, paranoid, and quit her job, or have a breakdown. And what if the crooked sign is only an advertising gimmick to attract attention, like the upside down ads in the classifieds, or the spastically-posed mannequins. She might say thanks for telling her, but she'd think, *Gotcha, you old fart*, and set every sign in the place askew.

Wendell forged ahead. "But the thing about depression... the thing which separates the cured from the cursed is simply an understanding of the strategy of the ailment. Once you have depression's plan of attack, there you go."

He'd worked his way over to where I was sitting and was presently shampooing where my feet would have been if I hadn't raised them onto the windowsill. His silver mass lunged.

"Depression has to be on top of you to depress," he said. "If you're above it, then it's below you. Its push, therefore, can only lift. Am I right? You follow? I'm saying you can de-press depression."

He raised his eyebrows ceilingward and started whistling along with the muffled siren of his tool, creating spiraling crescendos and decrescendos.

"Now there are entire bookcases full of methods for helping a person rise above depression, but they're all temporary fixes. And I wouldn't expect many of them to lift something like, say, involuntional melancholia—but you don't look the involuntional melancholic type."

Right when I thought he was going to talk me out the window, he veered off toward the kitchen. A curious melody and argument lifted from the street and tested the air where he'd been standing.

"There *is*, however, no denying your gumption's been gunny-sacked," he said, disappearing around the side of the refrigerator.

It felt better just having him out of sight.

"That's how Pastor G.D. would put it," he added.

"Don't you worry yourself about me," I said.

"I cannot help but."

"I'm fine as a fighting cock."

"You look kind of washed-out to these eyes," he said, still out of sight.

"Never felt better."

"Well, that's a syndrome too." He emerged. "In many cultures you would be a revered member of your community. In some you'd be a national treasure. You, a national treasure. Think about that for a minute. I for one sympathize totally with the plight of the senior citizen in our western society. Neglected, ignored, forgotten, flushed. Nobody can blame you for feeling the way you do. I say something should be done about this whole state of affairs, and I say soon, don't you think?"

My joints ached. My lungs turned to wet flannel.

"Just how old *are* you, anyway?" asked Wendell.

*Thrice the age of a dog is that of a horse;*

*Thrice the age of a horse is that of a man;*

*Thrice the age of a man is that of a deer;*

*Thrice the age of a deer is that of an eagle.*

Thrice thrice thrice thrice, that's how the Celts of auld figured it. Thrice, three, the perfect number: beginning, middle, and end. I have definitely entered my thirdness.

"I'll tell you how old you are. You have reached the golden age of enlightened reason. At least you have the capacity for entering into this phase of life—if only you can shed this earthly depression. Am I making sense to you?"

He headed my direction again, fixing his look squarely upon me. I shifted myself around to face outside. There is no one home, I meant him to understand.

Down on Grant, a skinny Italian man was cursing and making a gesture something like the one football referees use to indicate face-masking penalties. His taxi had just been stolen. The guy summoned a chase cab and off they went in dangerous pursuit through morning traffic, the young Italian slapping the side of the car like a whipless jockey.

"Some guy just stole a taxi," I said, more to myself than to Wendell. I leaned further out the window to watch the action. Both cars went screaming around the corner at St. Blandina, narrowly missing assorted collisions, then vanished.

Wendell's head was beside mine. He smelled of perfumed soap.

"Our own little city of thieves," he said. "But don't you worry at all: 'Stolen sustenance shall not nourish them. Their plates shall be filled with poisoned meats and their empires lost in their own widows' weeds.'"

"Widows' weeds," I said softly.

“You can credit that one to Pastor G.D. too. What a gift. What a gift. What a vision.”

His machine whined on as he returned to finish the kitchen.

I stepped down from the windowsill and gripped my bare toes into the wet carpet. By carefully disentangling select pieces of furniture and rearranging them, I was able to squirm through the puzzle, down the hallway—on my stomach, back, knees, in a crouch, waiting for the complete buggered trap to collapse—until I was hanging over one arm of the love seat, my head thrust between the legs of the coffee table, my fingertips just reaching the bedroom door.

“Eleanor?” I said, my face pushed into the cushioned back of the love seat. “Eleanor? Are you all right?”

I listened.

“Eleanor? Say something.”

“You won’t believe this. This is incredible,” beamed big Wendell, two rooms away. “Last Sunday, Brother Horton called every last member of our church before service and set it up to where, when Pastor G.D. stood to deliver the principal sermon, the whole congregation rose on cue and did their best Cary Grant imitations. You should have heard all three hundred of us chanting away, ‘G.D., G.D., G.D.’ It was during our televised service. You didn’t happen to catch it, did you?”

“Eleanor?”

“That’s a true shame. It was plain incredible.”

Hum to me, Eleanor. Hum. Hum that soothing old-woman’s hum of yours. That hum swelling up from your diaphragm, trilling in your breast. Eleanor? Hum. Almost a childlike hum, toying with pitch, timbre, and tempo. Filled with familiar but elusive phrases. Bits of nursery rhymes. *All the king’s horses went to the cupboard to find the lost sheep.*

“Pastor G.D. laughed so hard his microphone squealed.”

He was pulling my leg.

"I'll be damned," I said, trying to jerk my knee enough to pull loose.

"I refuse to believe that," he said. "You know, it was at the very same service that G.D. spoke so fiercely about the raw deal being given our retirees. 'We must lend our voice to the silenced seniors,' he said. 'For they are rich with God's wealth of wisdom. They shall know welcome in his divine employ. Let their worth be magnified in his ageless workforce.' Let me help you out of there."

I allowed myself to be extricated.

He'd finished his three rooms and shut off the shampooer, but the whir seemed to continue, only slightly less deafening, as if the waves had a perpetual form and would forever haunt us. Wendell snapped the plug from the wall socket with a brisk yank on the cord and began winding it around his fist.

"I'd like you to meet G.D.," he said firmly.

"Of course," I said.

"He can explain much more convincingly than I how to make your retirement a fruitful and memorable time. There's no reason whatsoever for you to spend these years feeling depressed and alone. We can plug you into all kinds of worthwhile activities."

In Wendell's pulling, my pyjama bottoms had somehow been twisted and were hanging half-off one hip. He smiled and straightened things for me.

"Do you really have this prime time to waste?" he asked. "Let me share something with you before I leave."

He grasped me by the shoulders and I watched his eyes tear. Outside, the horns seemed to agree on a common riff.

"I was driving over here to work this building this morning, right?" he began. "And this was fairly early because I commute in from Morton Hill and I go speed limit."



I nodded.

"It was maybe six-thirty, maybe earlier. There wasn't a soul on the streets. Now visualize this if you can: this city was like a modern ghost town. It was like I was the only man left on the planet. Can you see it? The only man left behind. It was like The Rapture. It was like everyone had departed without me. I quote to you from *I Thessalonians 4:16, 17*: 'For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.' It was like I hadn't heard the shout, or the voice, or the trumpet, so I had been left behind on this sinful earth, to Tribulation."

He dug his thumbs in deeper.

"I was sweating plenty," he continued. "And I could hardly feel my legs—you know that feeling. So I stopped the van right there in the middle of my lane—I mean, who was going to hit me, right? I parked there and prayed for a good five minutes. Then I was taken by the urge to turn my radio on. Like in the gospel song, 'Turn it on, turn it on, turn your radio on.' And I did, I turned it on. But there was nothing at all. Dead silence. You can see precisely how this confirmed my fears."

"Yes," I said.

"I wept," Wendell said. "I sat back and wept, and I wondered where I'd stepped from the righteous path, which had been the wrong fork in my mortal journey. Then, about sixty seconds later, I heard Pastor G.D.'s voice speaking to me. 'That concludes our quiet time for this hour,' he said."

He released me with a quick slap on the back.

"Just you be ready is all I'm saying," said Wendell, hauling his machine toward the front door. He paused halfway out and said, "Elvin'll be by tomorrow."

I thought I heard my coccyx moan.

"You two will have a lot to talk about."

"Maybe so," I said.

"Elvin's a member of our Seniors Crusade. He was also a close friend of my uncle's. He'll help you prepare to meet G.D."

And he was gone.

I went to the window and watched him come out of the building's main doors and climb into an old white van with a long, thick antenna sprouting from the roof. Traffic was still heavy with working people. Good jobs, bad jobs, joe jobs, snow jobs.

I pulled the window shut and began dragging furniture out of the hallway, sliding across the damp carpet. I would take Eleanor out for brunch, and we wouldn't return to the apartment until the damp dried and the noise waned. I wanted to hear only birds. Meadowlarks. I wanted to buy back our house.

"Oh, Eleanor," I complained as I finally flung open our bedroom door. I wanted to be hushed and mothered. Hummed to. I wanted to be rubbed where it ached. I wanted her to cut up laughing at this monstrous silver man, exorcise him from these rooms. "Oh, Eleanor," I said again, and started to drop beside her on the bed.

But she wasn't there.

I patted her side of the bed. I ran my palm over the rumpled sheets. She was not in the room.

I looked deeply into the dressing table mirror, as if she might've been lured through it into another dimension.

The bedroom curtains flapped at me, and I went to the window and leaned out, expecting to see her rising up through the city's air with thousands of other pure beings.

She reached up to me from her seat on the fire escape, took my hand and gave it a squeeze, my sweet hummer did, humming faintly, bless her, "Onward Christian Soldiers."

## E. D. Blodgett / BESTIARE

### 1

Music is naked, it wears  
the rain and stillness after rain.  
Music is grass  
of no colour,

the wind where grasses move,  
ascetic, disappearing against the ground  
returning, grass moving,  
touching without touch,

its giving up a gift.



When Francis from Assisi spoke, the birds  
as one removed their music from the air,

the wind fell, the little world awed.  
When Francis spoke, he spoke of how we are—

nothing's children—being what we breathe:  
they did not hear the words, but heard wind

if one should speak the wind. And when he raised  
his hands, it was not hands they saw, but trees

that they had touched. But how they marvelled most  
to gaze into his eyes: for birds who fly

where the seas flow, it was to see them all  
exposed, the last treasures bared, a sea

of glass, beauty fathoms below, the weft  
of fish, the sound of their wakes untranscribed.

Francis, your eyes are fish, deep pools  
of fish, their food the sun and other stars.

Is this the bare  
translucent place  
where the least air  
leaves its trace,

absence where flute  
and timbrel play,  
the music mute  
and far away?

And what does Francis  
hear, his eyes  
the orifice  
where earth and sky

duet and dwell  
in harmony,  
bright bagatelle  
of agape

and absent friends?  
Where do you stare,  
to what ends  
of music's spare

start in space?  
Tell me, Francis,  
is this grace,  
the genesis

of song to see,  
the place where I  
may come to be  
within the sky

beside the sun  
and evening star?  
Of music one  
chord we are,

you, Francis, and I, the birds you tamed,  
 and other beasts that once Neruda  
 turned to word—his birds consuming night,  
 his pigs that hold dawn in the brilliant air,  
 his fleas, ancient and Sanscritic—one

ode of elemental joy to speak  
 (Neruda who wanted to converse with pigs,  
 Francis who marvelled when the birds became  
 a cross and flew away, and I who gaze  
 upon the world turned to zoo) and say

the metaphor of music is the place  
 where pigs and fleas, spiders, birds and snails  
 become one, singing where Francis passes  
 by, and learn where they begin—falling from  
 the mouth of God, chanting for each bird

all the variations that they  
 will need to know, then to fall mute.  
 So the songs that pigs and whales recite,  
 and so mere pigs, polyphonies  
 transcribed to mud and then returned to where

fugues originate. The metaphor  
 of music is the holiness of bees,  
 the metaphor of music is the pig who speaks  
 the way Neruda speaks, the metaphor  
 of music is the death of whales, the death

of every elephant, the metaphor  
 of music is the word that Francis spoke,  
 singing when the war was done, of all  
 his sisters—moon, earth, water, stars—  
 and all his brothers—fire, wind and sun.



But Orpheus—the trees stand  
 forever rapt, their leaves refuse  
 to fall, the wind sighing and  
 the very birds bemused—

Orpheus, this elegy's  
 for you, your body everywhere,  
 your head within the Po amazed.  
 I think we breathe an air

charged with Orphic remains, a rain  
 of Orpheus, pianos that play  
 where the wind strikes the trees and then  
 desists, funereal sighs

of beasts entranced. Orpheus,  
 you never sang but wept: I hear  
 the earth, its crying *sparagmos*,  
 the tearing of the air

your one song. Wherever you sing,  
 the rain is blood. Orpheus,  
 the docile beasts he tamed, this song  
 a dirge for each of us.

6

Music is synapse, somewhere between its end  
and where it takes its rise, circumscribed

(snakes burrowed in glass, bears in pits,  
allegories of birds, blood congealed).

7

Francis stripped:  
the war with Perugia,  
Egypt's slaughter,  
crusades failing,  
the song of Brother Death,  
a cell on Monte La Verna,  
blood,  
a painting by El Greco,  
an entry in a dictionary.

The image of music as holiness:  
 it gazes  
 into itself, one  
 note an eye  
 that seeks the sun—  
 cosmic lullabye.

The image of music as silence:  
 its absence  
 a snow that drops—  
 I do not know  
 where music stops.

The image of music as closure:  
 its composure  
 the small death  
 of snails—  
 my breath  
 fails.

The image of music as cantico  
 for pigs: *do*  
*re mi* it sings—a scale  
 that has  
 no tale  
 but as.

Think of music blind: it never saw  
 the sun, nor saw the place  
 where fish descend. Music is

meditation's counterpoint, the leap  
 of music making light, a light that only  
 the blind behold, an absence that

the wholly naked wear. Come:  
 I have  
 no outside.



## Brian Fawcett / THE WORLD MACHINES

Around noon on my nineteenth birthday, Old Man Nelson showed up at the small shack I lived in. I heard him coming, talking to himself as usual, and I opened the door as he reached for the doorknob. He would have walked in without knocking, like most people. With him I didn't mind—he owned the land my shack stood on, and he'd never once asked me to pay any rent.

"Put your coat on, son," he said in his slight Scandinavian accent. "I got something you need to know about. It's your birthday present."

Old Man Nelson drove a huge black Oldsmobile that looked like a gangster's car. But he didn't look like a gangster. He looked like what he was: a retired logger who'd made a lot of money and who told stories about everything under the sun except how he'd made his money. I don't remember how I got to know him, but since I liked to listen to his stories and I lived on one of the many properties he owned, we came as close as young men and old men come to real friendship. For a couple of years, I spent quite a lot of time listening to him.

"You know," he began, as he turned the big Oldsmobile out of the alley, "them buggers who run things don't do it by themselves, eh?"

He knew this question would interest me because we frequently talked about how things were run around the city. I'd noticed, among other things, that even though the Mayor and Council of our small town were stupid and short-sighted men, they exercised a degree of authority and control they couldn't possibly have understood and certainly didn't earn. There was a kind of gap between what they said about how things worked and the complex and overlapping processes by which even I could see the city operated. This gap, which I merely sensed without understanding its workings, was a disturbing darkness that resided at the core of the town. I could never quite forget that it was there.

I began to see it while I was a small boy watching the city crews dig up the streets, install pipes in the holes, and then fill in the holes. The next year they would do the same thing over again. One year, according to my father, it was water pipes. The next year, sewer pipes. Another year, gas. Then they replaced the pipes. I believed, as most children do, that the world and every action in it had a purpose; that it was under some sort of benevolent and rational control, even though I'd already begun to realize there was very little evidence to back this up. Watching the crazy way the crews dug up the streets every year by itself convinced me, by itself, that whatever was going on wasn't rational or benevolent on any terms I could understand, but I continued to believe that at least it operated on some sort of logic. But what was that logic, and what did it serve? As I grew older, finding the answer to that question preoccupied me, and consequently, Old Man Nelson's opener snapped me to attention.

"What do you mean, they don't do it by themselves?"

Old Man Nelson had a way of telling stories that made things fuzzier before it made them clear. That was one of the reasons I liked listening to his storehouse stream of anecdotes and stories. Listening to them was like walking into a fog, and coming out with money in my pocket. All I had to do was show some curiosity, then nod my head in the right places to assure him that I was listening carefully. He'd talk, and I generally learned something interesting or useful.

"Well," he said slowly, "those buggers don't know much of anything. They just know where the switches are, and they like having people running this way and that more than they should."

I nodded, but kept silent. It made sense, but this wasn't the right time to ask questions. I let the fog spread further out.

"Out by the lake I'll show you something you've never seen before," he said.

I'd been to the lake dozens of times, and I'd never seen anything unusual, except maybe the time my sister got a bloodsucker up her nose.

"You've never seen it because you didn't expect anything unusual to be there," he said, fielding my unasked question perfectly. "That's the way these guys do things. They put things where nobody expects them to be, and so nobody looks right at them. You can't see what anything is unless you look right at it. Even then what you're seeing can't be understood if you don't have the words to get a hold on it."

"Who's 'they'?" I asked. We shared a taxonomy but our vocabularies were slightly different. For instance, Old Man Nelson called the Mayor and Council "them buggers." I referred to them as "those assholes." Maybe the difference was because they really hadn't done anything to me yet, and Old Man Nelson often complained that they spent most of their energy thinking up ways to screw him.

"The Bosses," he said.

"You mean those assholes down at City Hall?"

"No. Them buggers don't know nothing. I mean the Big Bosses." He paused. "The ones you never see. If you're really doing something you don't go strutting around like a rooster, crowing about it."

"So what do these Big Bosses do, anyway?"

"They run everything, and they make sure nobody gets out."

I sat in the roomy imitation leather seat beside Old Man Nelson and watched the shacks whiz by outside the car window, mulling over the idea. I wondered for a moment if he was talking about God, and decided he wasn't. He didn't believe in that crap, and neither did I, anymore. The idea of God used to be comforting. This idea wasn't. I didn't know a lot, but I had figured out that anyone with that kind of power wasn't going to be interested in me. Power was for assholes, and I didn't want to be an asshole. I didn't know what I wanted to be but I knew that there were a lot of assholes out there. The world was full of assholes, and the world seemed to be changing in such a way that only assholes would be able to get anywhere in it. Old Man Nelson was about the only adult I knew who wasn't an asshole, come to think of it.



"You asleep?" he asked, as much to prevent me from falling asleep as anything.

I had a talent for sleeping. I could sleep anywhere, anytime, without the slightest provocation. I think he admired that talent more than anything else about me. He often said that if he didn't talk to me constantly I'd drop off on him. Then he'd laugh and tell me to get lots of sleep now, because when I got old like him I wouldn't ever get any sleep. He didn't sleep much, he said, because he knew too much, and if he let his guard down, them buggers would walk all over him.

"I'm not sleepy today," I said. "What did you mean when you said the Bosses run everything?"

Old Man Nelson paused, as if figuring out a way to make it simple enough for me to understand. Whenever he was thinking hard an odd expression came over his face, a grin that made him look part goat and part elf. "People get up in the morning and then they sleep most of the night, right?"

"Right." I didn't bother to complicate things by pointing out that he didn't sleep that way.

"Why?" he asked, flatly.

"What do you mean, why?" I replied. "Because that's how things work. You can't stay awake all the time. If you tried, you'd get too tired to stay awake, and then..."

I sensed that I was digging myself into a hole. "Darkness makes people sleepy," I finished lamely. "I dunno."

"If everybody got up when they wanted to, and slept when they wanted to, the Bosses' system would get bugged up," he said.

"Some people would sleep all the time, like you, and some would sleep all day and stay up all night, and some people wouldn't sleep at all."

"I guess."

"And things would start to change."

"Yeah?" I said, starting to see some shapes in the fog. For one thing, I was going to have to revise my theory about change. Instead of changing things, the Bosses were keeping things as they were.

"Yeah. So the Bosses keep it all going the way it already is."

"If everybody did what they wanted wouldn't everything just break down?"

Old Man Nelson gazed at me patiently. "At first, that's about all it would be. But after a while people would start seeing what really needs to be done, and when that happened, things would start to change."

"So how do the Bosses keep things from changing?"

"That's what I'm going to show you," he said.

"So what you're saying is that the Bosses don't want anything to change, and that's a bad thing, is that it?"

"Sure. They don't want real change, anyway. Things in the City can grow bigger, like trees do, and if they grow bigger people think things are changing when they're not. But if something different—really different—starts to happen then the Bosses might lose."

"Might lose what?"

"I dunno. I've never figured out what it is they're so damned scared of losing. Money, maybe, but maybe something more."

"Something more?" I asked. "Like what?"

Old Man Nelson shook his head. "You wouldn't understand if I told you."

"How come you know all this?" I asked. "Is it because you don't sleep much yourself?"

Old Man Nelson thought that one through before he answered. I felt the car slow down.

"I dunno about that either," he said, finally. "I guess I got a funny ticker in me. Damn thing doesn't work like it's supposed to. I keep waking up with my heart pumping like a pack of dogs chasing a rabbit, and I start seeing things."

The car speeded up again, and I watched the shacks along the roadside get blurry until they seemed like one, long, continuous shack. They began to peter out, and for a while, all there was to look at was blurred birch and poplar thickets.

As we started up the long ridge that overlooked the lake, the countryside started to change. The trees got larger, and, I noticed for the first time, more evenly spaced. Old Man Nelson was whistling quietly. The tune was unfamiliar, but catchy. We reached the crest of the ridge, and I could see the brilliant blue water of the lake below.

"Down we go," said Old Man Nelson, and abruptly pulled the car off the main road, through a shallow thicket of willows and onto a narrow paved lane I didn't know was there. For a second I thought he'd gone crazy and was smashing up the car. We'd been going at least fifty miles per hour.

"Not many people know about this road," he said, as if that explained his peculiar method of entering it.

"I sure didn't," I whispered, beginning to breathe again as he slowed down.

I couldn't see the lake anywhere, and it should have been easily visible as soon as we pulled off the main highway. The lane we were slipping silently along was strange. I could see it hadn't been used much, because the tarmac was still clean and black. The underbrush crowded closely along it, and in places had begun to infringe on the margins. I didn't know what to make of it, and I sat there, expecting the lake to appear any second. But it didn't, and Old Man Nelson kept driving.

Then the underbrush along the sides of the lane thinned out and disappeared, and the evergreens went with it. The evergreens had been replaced by geometrically spaced poplars, their pale olive-green trunks unspotted and straight. The lane flattened out, and seemed to turn back on itself. I felt panic rising in me; I'd heard the stories about old men kidnapping people and killing them, although I couldn't really relate those stories to Old Man Nelson. As if to reassure me, he chuckled to himself and told me it was just a little further.

The lane curved through the poplars again, and ended abruptly in a small clearing. At the head of the clearing the ground rose sharply and there was something like the front of a building cut into the hill. It was odd-looking, constructed as an arch with two pillars about twenty feet high on each side of the doors. The doors themselves were glass, like the kind they put in supermarkets. They even had the recessed rubber mats in front of them that make the doors open automatically.

Old Man Nelson brought the Oldsmobile to a halt at the far edge of the clearing, and I stepped out into a field of plants. They were flowering, and I recognized them as Indian paintbrushes. Like the poplars, they were native to the area, and like the poplars they had obviously been planted in a rigid geometry that made them seem as foreign as they should have been familiar. Then I remembered that it was still early summer, and that Indian paintbrushes bloomed much later in the year, in August.

"They're smart sons-of-bitches," Old Man Nelson said as I knelt down to pick one of the red flowers. "They get them to bloom right from the time they come up out of the snow until freeze-up. But they don't taste good like the real ones do."

I pulled one of the nectar tubes from the flower and sucked the transparent liquid from it. It tasted bitter and I spat it out.

"You should listen to me better," Old Man Nelson laughed. "Let's go inside and I'll show you some things."

He walked toward the glass doors and, sure enough, they opened when he stepped on the rubber mat. We went inside and I followed him down a dim corridor.

"What is this place?" I asked, the questions bubbling out of me involuntarily. "Who owns it? Are you sure we're supposed to be in here?"

"You ask too many questions all at once, and none of them are the right ones," he answered, his voice echoing along the corridor.

"Who built this place?" I continued, searching for the right question without any idea of what it was or how to find it. "How long have you known about it? Does everybody know about it? How long are we going to be in here? Do you know the people who run this? Do you know how to get out of here?"

"Wrong questions, wrong questions!" answered Old Man Nelson, waving his hands but not stopping to turn around.

I gave up and followed him silently down the corridor. The walls moved back, and above me in the gloom I could just barely make out a network of huge steel pipes that stretched out and up in both directions. Here and there the network was penetrated by steel walkways and platforms, each with an array of wheelvalves, switches and small coloured lights. From the low, even hum I knew that whatever the installation was, it was working, operating. What it was doing, I had no clue.



Except for Old Man Nelson and me, it was deserted. I was lagging behind—for an elderly man, Old Man Nelson walked swiftly, certainly, and I found myself scrambling to stay up with him. When I got even with him, I caught at his sleeve.

“What is this place?” I asked, almost pleading. “Where are we going?”

Old Man Nelson gazed at me without slowing his pace, and without answering my questions. As I grabbed at his sleeve again, he swerved out of my grasp and into an alcove I hadn’t seen. He stopped, and waited for me to enter behind him.

“Wait,” he whispered, “We can’t talk here.”

I obeyed, and found myself following him down a long, narrow corridor with a low ceiling. Up ahead I could see that the corridor ended in a set of glass doors much like the ones we’d come in by.

Old Man Nelson stepped on the rubber mat, the doors opened, and he walked through them into a room that was instantly flooded with bright light. I followed, skipping into a run to keep the doors from closing against me.

“We can talk here,” he said, calmly.

The flood of my questions washed over him until he waved me back.

“I’ll start from the beginning,” he said. “This installation is one of their machines. I don’t know for sure how large it is. Very large, obviously. It isn’t the only one I’ve seen, either. I discovered another one, smaller and not so fancy, years ago, just before I left the Old Country.”

“What is it for?” I asked. “Who built it?”

“The Bosses built it,” said Old Man Nelson. “They built it to prevent us from changing the way things are. They keep them hidden to prevent people from finding them and understanding what they’re doing. If people found out how much of their lives were controlled they might tear them down.”

“But we’re here,” I said. “You found two of them, and now you’re showing me this one.”

“Hah!” He scoffed. “You’re gonna see how much difference that makes. I’ve been trying to show this thing to people for thirty years now, and you’re the first one I got to see it.”

“Thirty years? I’m the first one?” I felt equally tempted by both questions.

“I took my own boys out here but they just laughed at me. They couldn’t see what I was talking about.”

I knew he had three sons, and that he didn't have much use for any of them. Two were already wealthy logging contractors, and the third was at some big university back east studying to be a lawyer. Old Man Nelson's criticism of them was always the same: "too goddamn busy making money to see what the money was making them into."

"You're saying that this thing has been here for thirty years?" I asked, not quite believing that it could have been. It looked new, and from the entrance, very modern.

"I only said I've *known* about it for thirty years," he said, smiling at me as if I should know better. "It wasn't this big when I first found it."

"How big is it?"

Old Man Nelson scratched his chin just as if he were trying to decide out how many steps it was to the corner store.

"I walked it out this way, a few years ago," he said, pointing in the direction we'd been going. "I figure it goes almost all the way to the river, which is about nine miles. Down at the far end you can hear the river if you put your ear to the wall. The last time I checked it didn't go as far to the north, but then that was where the newest machinery was, so I don't know how much it's grown."

"What does it do?" I asked, after a moment of silence.

"I can't answer that for you," he said. "I can show you what it is, but I can't tell you what it does, exactly."

I waited for him to explain what he meant by that, but he didn't elaborate. Another silence ensued, but it wasn't, I realized, really silent. Beneath our voices was the sound of the machine, which alternated regularly between a deep rumble and a drone-like hum.

"Can we go further in," I asked, "so I can figure it out for myself?"

"We could," he said, "but it wouldn't help you. Besides, there's a danger I might lose track of you, and I don't know if you could get out on your own."

"Can we try to go further anyway?"

"You can always try," he said, his tone shifting, as if we were suddenly discussing another matter. "But it's the same here as anywhere else. You'll reach a place where you're not capable of taking in what you're seeing, and when that point is reached you stop being able to understand. If you can't understand things, you come under their control. That's no good. You've got to take this in a little at a time."

I didn't understand what was going on and I didn't really understand much of what he was saying, and instinctively I began to look around me for something material that would enable me to. He lapsed into silence, and I turned and sidled over to examine one of the walls of the room. When I touched it, it was utterly smooth, undefined, although from a distance it had appeared to be rough concrete. I jerked my hand back, alarmed.

"It's like that," he said. "That's the frightening part. From a distance, it seems to make sense, and it can almost look familiar. But the closer you come to it the less definition it has. That's one of the ways you recognize their materials."

"Are there other entrances?"

"Lots of them. They're all over the place, but it's difficult to recognize what they are when you see them. The one we entered by is the only one I know how to reach. I guess you could say that it belongs to me."

"Are you here a lot? I mean, do you spend very much of your time in here?"

Old Man Nelson sighed. "You better start to watch your language more carefully. I don't 'spend' time—that's their way of thinking. I lose time here, but I don't spend it, because I get nothing back, and neither does anyone else. And I'm here a lot. More and more as the years go on."

I wasn't used to fluorescent lights, and my eyes were getting sore. Worse, I was having trouble breathing. The room—and the whole installation—was air-conditioned, but all that did was to flavour the air with an acrid dustiness. I wanted to get out, but I also wanted to find out as much as I could about the place.

"Where are we now?" I asked, gesturing at the walls around us. "What is this room?"

"It's sort of a museum," Old Man Nelson replied with an ironic chuckle. "I've found a few of them like this. The only difference between this and the rest of the installation is that out there, anything resembling a question and answer sequence activates the control panels. In here, as far as I can tell, nothing happens. That's why I brought you here to answer your questions."

"How'd you find out about that if you've never brought anyone else here?"

"I didn't say that. I said that no one else has been able to see what it is. You should listen more carefully." He took my arm and pushed me gently in the direction of the doors. I balked.

"One more question?"

"Okay, ask it. But no more."

"I don't understand how this can be a museum. There's nothing here except bright lights and walls I can't see properly. Museums are supposed to be full of relics, dead things. This place is more like a waiting room."

"This is a museum—at least on the Bosses' terms. A museum, as far as they're concerned, is just a warehouse to store dangerous substances in, a place where things or ideas are put in order to make them inactive. Does that answer your question?"

It didn't, but I nodded anyway. "I guess so," I said.

I followed him back down the corridor and into the larger cavern with its overhead array of pipes. Old Man Nelson turned back the way we'd come. I wanted to see more, so I quietly slipped off in the opposite direction. I was hoping that by the time he noticed I'd be so far away he'd have to let me go on by myself. There was nothing about the installation that was frightening to me. Already it seemed familiar and dull, and it didn't feel like I was in any physical danger. After all, the place was empty except for the two of us, and the machinery was far above my head, humming steadily.



I walked several hundred yards without looking behind me, and heard nothing from Old Man Nelson. When I turned around to see if he was coming after me, he'd vanished. That didn't alarm me. I knew roughly where I was, and getting out was simply a matter of following the long corridor back to the entrance where, no doubt, Old Man Nelson would be waiting.

I walked, the sound of my footsteps lost beneath the hum, for what felt like several miles. But the landscape around me, if that's what it was, stayed the same. Then, among the gunmetal grey of the pipes overhead appeared other colours: at first pastels, and then richer primary colours. The effect was of a riot of colour. I was gazing up into them when I bumped into Old Man Nelson.

"Are you impressed?" he asked.

"With what? With all this?"

"With the colour," he laughed. "Do you know where you are?"

Until that moment I thought I knew where I was. But since I had no idea how Old Man Nelson had gotten there, I was no longer so sure. Without waiting for my answer, he took me by the arm and walked me through a set of automatic glass doors. I was startled to find myself outside the entrance we'd entered by.

Old Man Nelson didn't offer any explanation. He just told me to get into the car.

"It's getting late," he said gruffly, as if he regretted the entire episode. "I've got some things I have to take care of."

Overhead, the sky had clouded over, and the poplars were shimmering in the light breeze, exposing the silvery undersides of their leaves like they always do before it rains.

\* \* \*

But it didn't rain that afternoon. It should have, but since that afternoon, nothing else has been the way it should be, or the way it used to be. We drove back to town on the dusty gravel roads. Old Man Nelson didn't have much to say and neither did I. He dropped me off at the shack and as I got out of the big black car I thanked him for showing me the machines. He just laughed in a preoccupied sort of way.

"You don't have to thank me for that," he said. "The buggers were there all the time. Now you gotta figure out what they are,

and how to remember what they are. After that, you'll have to decide what you're going to do about them."

\* \* \*

I knew exactly what to do. Those machines were composed of pipes and there was a network of pipes in the ground all through the city. Obviously, they were connected. I turned my small shack upside down trying to find where they entered. Then I realized that my place wasn't like most—I had no running water, no toilet, no gas. I checked the electrical system, but found nothing unusual except a third bare copper wire that seemed to have no purpose.

For weeks after that, I drove everyone I knew crazy as I checked their houses for pipes. I found apparently disconnected pipes and irrelevant wires everywhere I looked, but I couldn't establish a pattern to any of it, no logic. I gave up when my mother, after eyeing me carefully while I searched her house, suggested that perhaps I should see a doctor about my problem.

\* \* \*

That August, Old Man Nelson died on me. I didn't get to see very much of him after he showed me the machines. He just didn't come around. I wanted to go out to see the machines again, but we didn't have the kind of friendship that allowed me to visit him. He'd always come by on his own time, and now he didn't seem to have much of it for me. It was as if he were in a hurry, all of a sudden. He told me himself that he was busy—"planning something important," he said when I ran into him on a downtown street one hot afternoon. He looked tired, older than before, his step slower, his breathing laboured. I didn't think too much about it because his eyes were as bright and alert as ever—maybe more so.

I had a hard time finding out the exact details of his death. His wife didn't like me, and because his sons knew the old man preferred my company to theirs, they didn't like me either. I sent a note when I heard about his death, but nobody answered it. I even phoned his wife. But since I didn't really know what I wanted to ask her, and she was aggressively not interested in talking to me about anything, our conversation was a short one. From what I was able to piece together, Old Man Nelson organized a family reunion of some sort—all his sons were in town before he died, and so were a number of relatives. The reunion—a picnic—

was held at the lake less than a mile from the stretch of road where he'd pulled the car through that thicket to show me the entrance to the machine.

At the picnic, the old man had attempted to take the family for a walk in the woods. When they refused to go with him, he flew into a rage, storming off, deliberately, according to his son, into one of the impenetrable alder and devil's club thickets that surround the lake.

When he didn't come back, a search was launched. They found him in a small clearing at the heart of the thicket. At first they thought he was sleeping, his head cradled comfortably on a mossy log amid the Indian paintbrushes that filled the clearing. The paintbrushes were in full bloom, but the old man was dead. His wife said that it was his heart.

I went to the funeral, even though I knew Old Man Nelson had been a vocal atheist. A preacher got up and had a few things to say about the life beyond, and how, although he didn't know "the deceased," as he put it, he was certain that Old Man Nelson was going to his deserved reward. None of the sons delivered a eulogy, and there weren't very many people there, considering Old Man Nelson lived in town for close to fifty years. I didn't go to the interment, and the family didn't hold a wake. They all looked impatient during the service, like they were needed elsewhere.

I hitch-hiked out to the lake a few days later. The man who gave me the ride out thought I was a bit nuts, wanting to get out on a stretch of deserted highway, particularly since it was fire season and a small fire was burning in some slash only two or three miles away.

"You never know when those fires can take off with the wind and burn off a whole god-damned hillside," he told me.

"Not this one," I replied, and slammed the car door shut, waving him on.

I found the lane easily; it was simply “there,” as if it had been waiting for me. But as I walked down the gently sloping tarmac, I sensed a change: the poplars were losing their leaves, and as I reached the turn where, before, the trees grew in regimented order across the flattened park-like landscape, instead of order I saw carnage: trees with broken tops, trees blown down, and here and there between them, mounds of debris: old house siding, bits of stucco, broken bottles, scraps of pastel plastic. In the clearing where the glass doors with the columns had been, there was a sizeable gravel pit, the bottom covered with about two feet of slimy water rhinestoned with gasoline and diesel. The air was rife with the stink of garbage and petroleum.

The entrance to the machine itself was different. The glass doors had been removed and in their place were heavy steel doors of the same gun-metal grey of the first pipes I’d seen inside. The rubber mats were gone, and so were the columns.

I tried the door, and it opened—not automatically, and not easily—but it did open. I hesitated, not sure if it was safe to enter, and as I did so I heard a familiar laugh. I spun around, and there, just beyond the gravel pit, I thought I caught a glimpse of Old Man Nelson disappearing into an alder thicket.

I hurtled after him, down into the pit and through the scummy water, and I scrambled up the slope after him into the thicket. But there was nothing there but the trees. Not a thing moved. There was nothing but the dappled sunlight filtering through the trees. I stood still for a moment, and then my ears picked up the faintest hum. In front of me was a clearing, and as if what the old man showed me had never been, the Indian paintbrushes bloomed in honeyed disarray beneath the smokey August sun. I sat down among them and waited. The hum grew louder, and I remembered that I’d left the doors to the cavern open. I got to my feet, and turned back.



Colleen Heinrich /  
FOUND CONVERSATIONS

OVERHEARD IN THE CAFETERIA

*1st man*

So, is that the recipe from the Moose-Head book?

*2nd man*

No, but it's great if you're into vegetarian food.

*1st man*

Are you feeding Nathan vegetarian?

*2nd man*

For sure—you don't need meat. He's really healthy. So's your kid. They look healthy. Sometimes he shits 3 times a day; sometimes not at all. I can't figure it out.

*1st man*

Same with David. I'd like to work maybe 4 days a week so I could spend time with the baby. I couldn't work full time.

*2nd man*

Me neither.

*1st man*

I couldn't work shift work. It makes you crazy.

*2nd man*

I know.

*1st man*

My father worked shift work all his life. He's crazy.

*2nd man*

My father never worked shift work and he's crazy.

*1st man*

Maybe it's not the shift work then.

*2nd man*

But my father's Italian.

*1st man*

Ah!

*2nd man*

He's a Fascist, too.

*1st man*

That's very fashionable right now.

*2nd man*

Yeah, Margaret Thatcher and Reagan—they're nearly Fascist.

Right wing.

*1st man*

Yeah. If you're too far right: you're Fascist.

## CAFETERIA II

*Girl*

So—I haven't seen you for a long time.

*Boy*

I've been working real hard this semester.

*Girl*

Yeah, me too.

*Boy*

I'm finished for today, though. So what have you been doing?

Still drink as much?

*Girl*

I don't drink any more than you do.

*Boy*

You sure used to. Man, you could really put it away. Remember that time?...

*Girl*

Yeah, well you weren't in such great shape yourself that night.

Anyhow, I'm seeing this guy now.

*Boy*

What guy?

*Girl*

This sorta shrink; like, I don't smoke dope or nothing any more—just a coupla tokes but I'm not into it.

*Boy*

That's good. You should take better care. Like going with guys—I mean, you could say no. You get used, you know.

*Girl*

Not so much any more—I've been real busy. I mean, I've got a class now.

*Boy*

Do you have to go? I mean, is it important?

*Girl*

Yeah, I guess. . . . We don't have a test or anything.

*Boy*

Well, why don't you skip out? We could go to my place.

*Girl*

And do what?

*Boy*

Well, my roommate has a class and I've got some brew in the  
fridge: we could do whatever we want.

*Girl*

How would we get there?

*Boy*

The bus—I've got lotsa change.



## Ramona Weeks / THREE POEMS

### THE TIE

Some prized ones are called  
“grenadine” and are dyed  
with a tint akin  
to pomegranate syrup.  
They are tied with knots  
simple as a spider’s slipstream  
of air,

    fluid gestures  
like a downpour  
drawn together  
by something timeless.  
Deep in your closet, silk snags  
on its own light  
and frays among boards  
redolent of trees,  
striking red matches.

A necktie becomes party  
to your hanging.  
You  
choose well.

## SWIMMING

Remember the buoyant  
feeling of water on a summer afternoon? Fins  
webbing through blue water, you see eternal

light diffuse and spread on the pool's surface  
as you emerge into a citrus spotlight,  
eyelashes doubly wet, squinting at sun. Leaves

are collapsible brown tents edging the tiles.  
A dragonfly skims the water's skin,  
a moth in hope and harness. You propel

yourself toward a liferaft as if flying  
on theatrical wires, hair slick as Peter Pan  
intent upon windows and a ticking clock.

Your back grows hot; there is a drift  
of sheets, a hum of bees in syringa.  
They hover close on thirsty wings,

a continental shelf of drowsiness  
as you take a deep breath and sink beneath  
the shadow of the diving board. A white and blue rope

wakes you again. It spans the turquoise water,  
guarding you from sudden depths,  
plastic floats rotating like white ducks.

You can dodge, plunge under them,  
and fly toward the rotunda of far steps.  
Near the umbrella table is your zebra towel.

Upholstered velour, its loops are ember warm.  
Take off the webbed feet; you are an amphibian  
no longer. Blinking, you see carrier pigeons

of clouds overhead, wonder how no collisions  
happen as you breathe, wake, and eat,  
indulge life's necessary habits. Sleeping is a swim

on pinions; slashing through underbrush is waking up,  
portaging from one river to another. On final evenings,  
herons are fishing and you have time to watch.

## AIR FOR MUSIC BOXES

“Sarilda, quit mourning. Of course your heart is aching; hasn’t it always, one time or another? That’s partly what our hearts are for.”

Remember the musical powder box with the ballerina, the one who danced *en pointe* and twirled to *Tarentella*, dark hair shiny and marcelled, one arm upraised, one leg flexed beneath a wide blue mushroom skirt? She gradually slowed her pirouette as the key ticked. The mechanism lost a spring; the dancer would no longer turn: merely gazed toward a gold circle painted on her wrist. The pink gauze of the powder dome still wafted perfume and a tune, but the ballerina faltered, trapped in a spotlight of paralysis.

“That’s my fate someday, sure as you’re born.”  
And Grandma began cleaning frosted tulips on her looking glass.

Once Grandma owned another music box: two skaters and a varsoviana. The little man in *lederhosen* was the first to break; then the lady’s kirtle and her torso snapped. Only their legs kept lifting, skates stroking mirrored ice, until she broke them off.



Remember Grandmother,  
her trapunto cushions and bird-feather pictures, plaster cast  
of Andersen's Little Mermaid; how she dangled a lorgnette,  
wore cameos, smelled of violets? Remember  
her calico cat? The sound of her pump organ  
when she played hymns in the night? And when the doctor came  
and said she'd died— remember that? You curled up on her shoes  
but never wept. You hugged the ostrich boa,  
shedding after years, remembered the skaters, but were too old  
to believe her stories about heaven.

Does something ache?

Play the pump organ, wheezing memento she promised  
to leave you in her will. Wasn't there a song about robins  
who brought strawberry leaves to bury two frozen orphans  
in the forest once they were lost forever and lay dead  
in three-foot drifts of snow? Is that what snow is for?

The skating music dies, but you must go forward with the dancer.  
Something must mean everything, preferably at once.

## Ann Ireland / BORN TO RUN

Astronaut “Chip” Albright says, “Boredom’s the thing to fight in Space because when you get bored you get scared—and stupid. And that’s dangerous. So we maintain a strict regime of in-flight activities and try and make it as ordinary as possible, simulating earth’s conditions. You can’t just sit there strapped in a goddamn Orbiter and ponder the Universe.”

\*

Before I go into the subway I pack a satchel holding a magazine, writing materials, gum, and portable cassette player.

If I close my eyes with gospel blasting through my head will I forget where I am?

\*

I shove wood into the fireplace to warm up the cabin. It’s been two weeks since I’ve seen anyone. A deer visits from time to time, grazing in my lettuce patch till I shoo him off with a broom. Suddenly the silence is disturbed by shouts. Dropping the smoking log I race outside in time to see a green canoe capsizing in the rapids. The water is icy this time of year with mountain run-off. It takes me a minute to locate two heads bobbing and white hands fighting to clutch the gunwale of the overturned craft. The canoe lodges on a half-submerged boulder and is caught broadside by a wave and snapped in two.

Without hesitation I grab a length of branch and step out onto the silted spit down river a few yards. Ice water nips at my calves. I shout so they can hear me.

The current drives them, bouncing like two hats, near my extended branch. The man reaches for it, slips back, then manages to clamp on, raking into the wood with his nails. Twisting to find his friend we see she has already torn past, crying helplessly, her arms beating against the water.

Precariously balanced we chase her down river. He glues to the log like a starfish as I step over rocks and eddies doing my best not to fall in.

She has managed to wrap herself around a rock, fighting the current with little howls of terror.

Bracing against a tree I squeeze the lifeline as he unpeels her from the rock.

The rod bends. I've hooked two of them. I hold fast as they inch up, hand over hand. I can't pull them in myself but I can hold. I will hold tight as each muscle quivers resistance, as my feet dig into the soft mud.

After, we huddle by the fire sipping hot cider. Their clothes hang on a line nearby and they are naked under the quilt. Teeth chattering they thank me effusively in cultivated English accents. I offer homemade spoonbread which they've never heard of. He's balding, in his mid-thirties and not bad looking except for a recessed chin. She's younger, with a fresh innocent look. She combs her blonde hair as it dries.

I introduce myself. Extending a cold white hand he says, "I'm very pleased to meet you. My name is Charles, and this is my wife, Diane."

We shake hands and I get up to forage for spare clothing. It's been so long since I've had company.

\*

I make a map, in my head, not on paper. The turnstile, the token booth, then push the transfer machine button before descending the cold cement stairs.

Breathe normally. Think of astronauts pulling from earth's gravity field. On the platform, unless there is a train there, I shall walk to the end where the head car pulls to a stop. The best spot to sit is next to the window facing west, where the train is heading. This way I can see the light ahead, the outline of the tunnel, and the driver a few feet away. This is especially important: to realize

the machine is operated by this young man with stringy blond hair, a box of potato chips, and a newspaper propped against the window. Snap on the earphones, open the magazine and keep my eyes away from other passengers.

\*

I reach the bottom of the stairs. Stealing along the wall I make my way towards the far end. A red light blinks. Must have just missed a train. Hope it won't be crowded. If this one's crowded I might just wait for the next. Smiling with false confidence I survey the opposite platform. Half a dozen teen-agers lurk, giggling and pointing at something down in the tracks. I follow their gaze.

A boy, perhaps sixteen, gallops over the opposite track and jumps into the middle island, clinging to a billboard advertising car rentals. He swings from it, using his right foot as pivot.

"Train's coming!" yell his friends.

I don't hear anything: they're trying to scare him.

The boy dances from billboard to billboard, singing some pop song off-key. Then he slips, knocks his knee on the cement and curses. He crouches a moment by the rails, rubbing the injured knee.

"Let's go, Billy!" cries a girl. She's not laughing anymore. Edging towards the platform rim she holds out a hand.

"C'mon Billy, enough's enough."

I recognize her as the sensible one.

But Billy's full of it now and can't stop. He clambers back up on the boulevard and bows mockingly to his audience. His jean jacket opens and the black teeshirt has a slogan:

Born To Run.

A rumble signals an approaching train. Too soon to determine which direction.

"Come back right now, Billy!" the girl demands.

Her friends have stopped laughing.

"What's wrong with that asshole!" one boy says. He rubs his thighs and looks about nervously.

Billy grins and drops onto the tracks again, this time on my side, westbound. He is barely ten feet away, straddling the third rail. He flexes his hands like someone who's been out in the cold, like someone warming up for a fight.



"Don't you think it's time to call it quits?" I suggest in a deliberately cool voice. Billy looks at me then spits on the rail.

I get as close to the edge as I dare and squat.

"Why are you doing this?"

"Why not?"

By now there's a small crowd gathering.

"He's stoned," someone says.

"Do something!"

"Pull the emergency stop."

"Where??"

The rumble is getting louder and higher and I can see approaching lights now.

"You've got about ten seconds," I say to Billy. I have to swallow in the middle of the sentence.

He stares at me then at the lip of the platform. I think, but I'm not sure, that he intends to leave it to the last minute, then leap up.

He might make it in one go.

He might not.

His jeans are out at the knee. His hair's raggedy-long, not fashionable, and his skin is moon-cratered. I try and imagine what he'll look like in ten years.

The train driver sees what's happening, whistles loudly and yanks on the brakes. Though the tunnel is filled with the anguished screech, there is no slackening of speed. The train man's face is white.

Billy makes a running leap at the platform and at the same instant I reach my hand to clasp his. He is suspended for an instant, face grimacing as our hands whiten and suddenly I am tumbling over with him, over the yellow and black safety line into nothing, into sound. My elbow knocks against concrete and sings up and down my body like an electric shock and for a moment I think I've hit the third rail.

Then, hardly thinking, I roll over, pressing Billy and myself under the lip of the platform where there's a dark space about the width of a suitcase.

As the train hurtles by we crouch without breathing, watching the brief flash of light and the grinding of wheels a scant four inches from our nostrils. The vibration shakes through us so fiercely I'm sure my body's been blasted into individual cells. My left hand presses against his panting chest. It's warm. Born To Run Billy.

\*

The doors slide open. I am already standing nearby, ready to exit promptly. The earphones are turned down and the magazine stuffed into the satchel. I smile faintly at my fellow passengers before departing. No one cheers or nods recognition. Shouldering through the crowd I find the escalator leading to the buses. I like buses, most of the time. This one idles lazily, pumping clouds of grey exhaust into the corridor. I sit next to a window and look out into the street. Sun glares off the sidewalk, bleaching faces and storefronts a shiny white.

\*

"One thing that happens," Astronaut "Chip" Albright says, posing next to his glinting metallic space suit, the same one that transported him safely to the moon, "Is similar to what happens to the desert traveller." He flicks the ash of a forbidden cigarette. "After days even weeks of pushing through sand and relentless sun they begin to see mirages—the sparkling of water over the next dune, the rim of green palm trees.

"After hours of rocketing through unmarked blackness we start filling in a horizon line—like a dream sky and ground. Just to feel where we might be."

Suddenly there is an explosion of flashbulbs. "Chip" Albright squints into the dazzle, seeing first stars, then a dancing blackness. That night his puzzled smile is instantly solarized into millions of sheets of newsprint, then burnt into the hands of subscribers standing hip to hip in the hurtling train, swaying at each bend in the track.

## Monty Reid / TWO POEMS

### ECHO

The boy stood in a dingy leaning over the black water.

The line was a thread of light in his hand.

He was watching the pale weeds drift in a current he  
could not feel, how they leaned up at him.

There were gulls, slabs of fractured shale rising from  
the lake, and when he called out the echo fell  
around him like a handful of stones.

From the shore, they waved and called his name but he  
was watching the underwater weeds, how his line bent,  
refracted, at the surface and disappeared.

How his name fell around him in the water.

It took him an hour to row back to the fire because he  
had drifted so far.

There was a small trout in his basket and he lost two  
hooks in the weeds.

## THE FERN

Begin with instruction, the fern hung down to the floor and  
you had to keep adjusting the planter, sticking  
old catalogues under it, making it higher and higher as the fronds  
leaned out and down in tense arcs, all the individual  
leaves dotted underneath with spores and turning  
brown on the edges where they touched the carpet.

You must have done something  
right, maybe the regular soakings with rainwater  
collected in old tubs out back, or maybe it was  
the music, simple melodies your pupils repeated so  
often everyone left the house; the fern didn't  
have a choice, and look how well it's done, it  
hangs down to the floor and all you can do is  
clip it back because you can't set the pot any higher.

That care keeps the fern alive, and simple, even tho at  
your age it would be easy to forget and hard to reach  
up with water, the fern keeps demanding your attention, above  
the claims of all other plants, the ivy grown twice  
around the room, held up with pins, the hoyas, violets, lily,  
all those I never knew the names of—they claim you too  
the way they think the sunlight is theirs and  
it is. The fern also needs light, tho it sits out  
of the direct afternoon sun and dips its fingers into  
into sunlight on the rug, tentatively; it



can't resist. And where it touches the rug  
the leaves curl up and die and yet, something  
is nourished, new fronds uncoil downwards, nonflowering,  
and I have often wondered why, among all the blossoms  
that fall silently open throughout the house, so that  
every morning surprises you with color, why you have loved  
the uncomplicated green of this fern that has done nothing  
except endure and now occupies half  
the dining room. Is it the persistence that you love, that  
one plant survives everything you can do to it  
even love it, it stays green and now there is nowhere  
for it to go except out.

Just kidding.

All I wanted to do was describe the fern  
for you, to attend it with words, with something that will  
also survive your love and not be anything else  
to extend alternating leaves down into sunlight  
at the front window. I wanted the fern to be nothing  
else because you are so much like it, a patient green set  
just out of the sun, unexplained except by care, how  
it makes the room full, tho it has no spectacular flowers  
that give themselves to comparison. The fern  
has no flowers at all and will have none. But there is  
this: after caring for it longer than I can remember, for  
so long that even you cannot recall where you got it, you  
probably didn't know its name comes from the word  
for wings

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

MICHEL BEAULIEU died last summer. His writing energy and his generosity toward the poets and poetry of all of Canada will be missed. We offer *in memoriam* poem #16 from *Spells of Fury*, Beaulieu's most recent book.

JOHN NEWLOVE lives in Nelson, B.C. and, we hope, has a new book coming out this year.

MICHAEL KENYON is a Victoria writer whose work has appeared in several literary magazines, including *TCR* #27. Others of his stories will be published this year in *The Malahat Review*, *Grain*, and *Quarry*. "Keypunch" itself is from a group of stories entitled *Theatrical Removals*. He is currently working on a poem sequence.

MONIQUE FOUQUET attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts de Quebec and the Vancouver School of Art. She had her first major one-person show at the VAG in 1979. *Walking the Soft Earth* was on exhibit at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver in October 1985.

NOEL HUDSON's first collection of stories, *Mobile Homes*, will be published by Polestar Press in spring of 1986. Other short fiction has been published in several literary magazines, and comedy has aired on CBC TV.

E. D. BLODGETT is a highly regarded poet and theorist who teaches Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta.

BRIAN FAWCETT, a disciple of Frank Zappa, was born in northern B.C. many years ago. His latest collection of stories is *Capital Tales*. "The World Machines" is from a collection of fate tales about northern B.C. entitled *The Secret Journal of Alexander Mackenzie*. "The World Machines" is dedicated to the memory of J. K. Neilsen.

COLLEEN HEINRICH now lives in North Vancouver and attends Capilano College. The two "Found Conversations" are her first published works.

RAMONA WEEKS lives in Phoenix, Arizona and has been published widely in Canadian and American literary journals.

ANN IRELAND, a graduate of the UBC Creative Writing Department, now lives in Toronto. Her novel, *A Certain Mr. Takahashi*, will be published by McClelland & Stewart in fall of 1985.

MONTY REID lives in Drumheller, Alberta, where he works at the Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology. His most recent book of poetry is *The Alternate Guide*.

\$3.00

ISSN 0315-3754

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