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Hi-

Once again, Our Time magazine comes through in a pinch. It seems no matter how hard you try, someone or something is there to give you a hard time. I know...experience makes wisdom sharper. I have a lot of ideas going through my mind right now (albeit a bit befuddled), but I'll refrain from writing them down. I don't want this to turn into a lecture. Suffice it to say that I hope this magazine survives me...us. A lot of sweat, creativity, and chapstick went into the publication; it'd be a shame to see it get mired in Apathy. A bit of advice for those of you in the future...uh, strike that- you learn like the rest of us. Thanks to everyone who gave their help and support.

Bye-

Tim

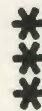
President

p.s. we did the cover like that on purpose- what do you think we are, stupid?

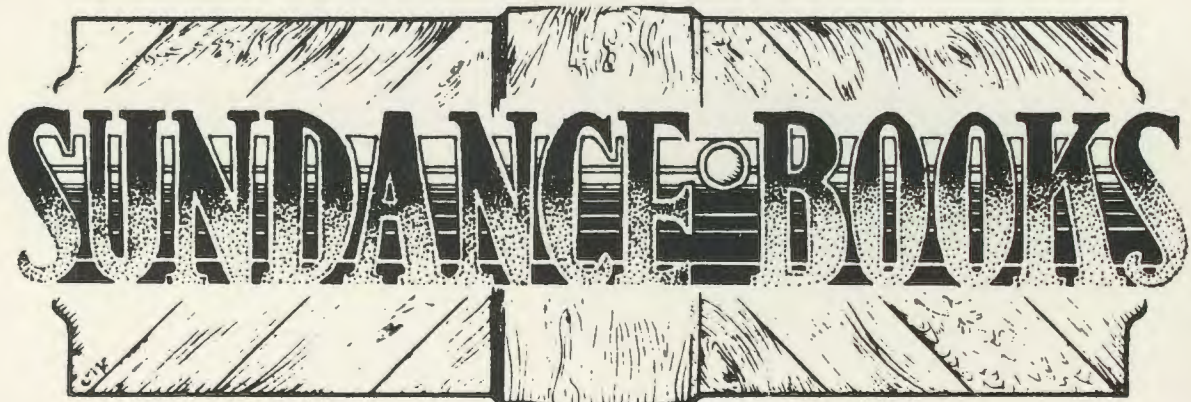
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Summer!



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Our Time magazine

— 186 80979

vol. 3 spring '87

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happy and healthy summer!**

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* cover photo by chas profitt

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The Lamron

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"the bands": Sheep From Hell (reunion show next year?)

The Stand

CAS & the custodial staff

Kelly Shanley— the sound man

Thanks, Chas... Hey, is that supposed to be əpɪsdn umop?



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—IRC

Feature perspectivesperspectivesperspectives

Another Vietnam in Nicaragua?

by Michelle Picardo

Nicaragua is perhaps the most politically controversial area today as far as the United States government is concerned. Beyond that, it is also controversial to the citizens of the U.S. With the Reagan administration allotting over \$100 million in military aid to the contras—amidst a continuing scandal—it is no wonder the people of the U.S. fear another Vietnam.

The greatest question is: what is the real purpose of this aid? The contras recognize that no amount of money is enough to overthrow the Sandanista government; only when the people of Nicaragua see a major force behind the contras will they become more involved

in the fight against the Sandanistas. So far it appears that the U.S. is not giving enough money for the contras to win their struggle, so why should we give any funds at all? The economic circumstances present in our country today should be enough to make the politicians realize that this money could be better used on the home front.

One wonders if the true purpose behind this aid is to fight the Soviets. The Sandanistas are receiving funds from them, and therefore the struggle is more or less a proxy war, with “us” against “them.” Does the United States genuinely want to help the contras or merely keep the Soviets away?

Furthermore, as many people question the legitimacy of the leadership

behind the contras, one must wonder whether a truly democratic government would be established if the contras ever did win their struggle. If the U.S. is to give millions to ensure democracy, there should be some type of guarantee that it will actually be established.

With questions such as these in the minds of the American people, it is easy to see why there is a controversy surrounding the events in Nicaragua. Ideally, however, an issue which involves over \$100 million should be much clearer.

Personally, I would like to see my money go toward programs beneficial to the American people, rather than be spent in a foggy situation.

Responsibility for Nuclear Power

by Tony Brinn

“... One would think that the NRC would investigate the geographic locations of some of our nation’s plants. The Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant in California received its license—even though it stands over a branch of the San Andreas fault.”

A meltdown is considered to be the ultimate nuclear accident. For about three hours on March 28, 1979, Unit 2 of the nuclear power plant at Three Mile Island, in Pennsylvania, had all the makings of a catastrophe. Malfunctions in plant equipment caused the accident, with a little help from the plant operators and managers, who inappropriately overrode the automatic safety equipment. It is unfair to simply blame the Metropolitan Edison employees for the accident, however. It should be pointed out that the facility, the reactor vendor, the architect and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission were responsible for the deficiencies in training, in control room design, in instrumentation and equipment and in emergency procedures. TMI was the worst accident at a commercial nuclear power plant in the United States. One has to wonder whether the industry is safe, because it is quite evident in looking at this particular accident (and many others which have occurred around the world) that we know little about its adverse effects.

More importantly, we don’t have proper emergency evacuation procedures that ensure the public’s safety.

Prior to the accident at TMI, emergency response planning was based on the assumption that certain types of accidents involving a core meltdown were so unlikely that they did not need to be covered by emergency plans. We can relate this situation to the Shoreham Nuclear Power Plant owned by the Long Island Lighting Company. The plant’s license application had been denied by the State of New York because it did not have a proper evacuation plan. One would think that the NRC would investigate the geographic locations of some of our nation’s other plants. The Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant in California received its license—even though it stands over a branch of the San Andreas fault.

Once an accident occurs, one wonders how the contamination is removed from the plant and its surroundings. To give an idea of the lengthy process involved, the recovery at TMI had two stages: cleanup of the facility (especial-

continued on 5

AIDS Awareness on Campus

by Tracey McCann

We have been bombarded with horror stories and dramatizations designed to better inform us about AIDS, yet as young, healthy college students we refuse to believe in its potential predation upon us. AIDS is no longer a disease affecting just homosexuals and intravenous drug users. Heterosexuals account for 3.8% of 30,000 AIDS cases in the country, and that number is expected to rise to 5.3% by 1991. Bisexuals and sex partners of intravenous drug users have freed AIDS from its previous boundaries. Our chances of being infected are now much higher.

We have rid ourselves of the ignorant belief that we can get AIDS by touching someone who has it. Now we must realize that we are not as free from infection as we thought.

The sexual promiscuity of the last two decades has suddenly declined. Saying hello to a stranger in a bar and saying goodbye the next morning is just too frightening now. You have no way of

knowing if the person you brought home is one of the one million people who have the virus. The scary part is that 90% of those one million do not even know they have it.

Sexually active adults, especially those in cities, have begun to show more caution in choices of sex partners. The maxim "You only live once" is giving way to "Better safe than sorry". Of course, many people think they'll ruin a good thing if they ask their partner's sexual history or insist on the use of a condom. It is uncomfortable to ask someone how many people they have been with, but it could mean the difference between life and death.

College campuses are the mainstay of ignorance regarding the spread of AIDS by homosexuals. College students are in the denial phase concerning safe sex. The last thing they want to hear is another lecture. College students like to have fun, and taking risks is part of that fun.

Students need to be more informed about safe sex. The use of condoms

can vastly decrease or even prevent the spread of AIDS. Right now, more high school students use condoms than college students, primarily for birth control reasons. The sexual habits of high school students have been more affected by the AIDS epidemic than those of college students. Today's high-schoolers were not raised during the sexual revolution and, unlike today's adults, they are more inclined to adapt their sexual lifestyles.

College students may just feel that AIDS is too far outside their world. However, we must realize that New York State has the highest percentage of AIDS patients in the country. Although AIDS is not prevalent in Rochester or the surrounding area, can we safely say that there is no chance it will strike anyone here?

Promiscuous behavior on college campuses will not cease, but hopefully the awareness of AIDS will increase. AIDS may have to strike very close to home in order for its latency to be grasped.

The Mass Media: A Great Communicator, or Just an Investment?

by Kwadjo Boaitey

What's Going On in South Africa—the issue which dominated much of the news last year. But what's happening in Ireland?

The media covered these and other stories religiously at one time, but eventually dropped them from the "hot spot." Although in most cases the situation which led the media to cover these events has yet to be remedied, coverage has been discontinued. The implications are great: the public is led to believe that the situation is resolved, and is no longer newsworthy.

The mass media (print, television and radio), being a business, arguably may seem to emphasize its business function rather than its informative function. The mass media (as a business) must comply with its investors' wishes. Media corporations must continually prove to their investors that they are a worthwhile and sound business venture. This is judged mainly by circulation size and



ratings. Once the circulation begins dropping, supporters become wary about the security of their investment.

The media institutions also must satisfy their audience, the general public. They must report news that the public is interested in.

The following elements are what comprise a news story: timeliness, proximity, prominence, consequence and human interest. Although any of the above criteria are found in the issues concerning Ireland and South Africa, the stories have somehow lost their "newsworthy" status. The American people have a short attention span and a lack of tolerance for the technical. They like explicit, sensational stories that appeal to their senses. An example is the amount of public support given to the Hearst papers during their years of "yellow journalism."

Since the only way the majority of the people receive the news is from the media, it would seem obvious that they

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\$2.8 Million Loss?

by Michelle Picardo

Did you vote for Reagan? Do you recall his promise of cutting financial aid for education? Well, it appears that he is keeping his word in that regard: his proposed 1988 fiscal budget, if passed, will mean a \$2.8 million loss in support for Geneseo.

Over 60% of the students on our campus will be affected by Reagan's proposal. More than half of the students currently receiving Pell Grants or Guaranteed Student Loans will not be eligible for them in 1988. Along with this, the entire Supplemental Educa-

nuclear responsibility

continued from 3

ly decontamination and disposal of the radioactive debris, including the damaged core) and the future of Unit 2—whether to refurbish it as a power plant or to decommission it. One can't even imagine the amount of money a cleanup of this magnitude costs. According to the Bechtel Power Corporation, the replacement of the core in Unit 2 would be \$400 million. It was assumed that a period of four years would be needed for cleanup from the time workers first entered the facility—a manpower requirement of approximately 4.1 million man-hours. The overall projected figure came to \$200 million. If the plant was to be decommissioned the cost would be around \$192 million. These figures make one question if we are headed in the right direction: is it worth the money when one considers the environmental risks involved?

When one talks about the nuclear power industry, there should be some concern about toxic waste disposal. The waste cannot just be thrown into

mass media

continued from 3

should be asked to fulfill their responsibility and give us news. However, as a business, by giving comprehensive, technical news they lose money. It is understandable how this purely communicative function is not always the popular thing to do.

Time and money are constraints the media unfortunately faces. There are many news events happening all the time; the media has to sift through them and the result is that only the items the public wants to hear are reported.

tional Opportunity Grant program will be obliterated and all federal work-study programs would be denied. In other words, out of the 4,178 students on our campus that currently receive some type of financial assistance, only 1,540 will receive aid in 1988.

The irony of this dismal picture is that so many students voted for Ronald Reagan, presumably aware of his intentions. Some advice for voters in the next presidential election: understand how much you can be affected by a policy, no matter how far off it may seem to be at election time.

the ground. Safety measures have to be taken; the environment can become polluted. Toxic waste disposal is a very serious topic, one which should not be taken lightly.

The issue here is the safety of the people. It would be in the best interest of the United States to set up a commission to review the nuclear power industry. The accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in the Soviet Union should be a lesson to us. We now know much more about the effects of a nuclear accident: within three to four miles of the Chernobyl accident, the victims stand a fifty-fifty chance of surviving. Smaller amounts of radiation within a range of 60 miles from the site will result in deaths from leukemia and other forms of cancer. The earth up to 60 miles around the plant is severely contaminated and will be for decades. All of this information should make people think—and if they do, the environment will most likely prosper.





Ice Cream Bar

Corner of Main & Bank St.

Ice cream in 25 flavors/
Sandwiches/
Chili



movies movies movies movies

by Sandy DeMott

Black Widow *****

Starring Theresa Russel and Debra Winger

For those of you who love thrillers but feel faint at the sight of blood, this is the perfect film. It has a strong storyline and wonderful acting, all of which would have been defiled by violence. It is a psychological murder mystery pertaining to whether or not the perpetrator is insane. It is not a "whodunnit," but a "how-are-they-going-to-be-caught?"

However, by the middle of the film, the viewer is less concerned with the murder plot and more interested in the other themes of the movie, namely: obsession, love and femininity.

Theresa Russel plays a beautiful woman who marries men and then kills them off by poisoning. She is the black widow, a type of spider which mates and then eats her "husband." She ensnares men in the web of her woman-ness and that entrapment is their death. She symbolizes dark femininity, the dangerous side of a woman's "wiles," if you will. Debra Winger, on the other hand, is a woman who denies her own femininity (consistently turning down dates, dressing in baggy, somber clothing, acting rather brusque, etc.), yet becomes obsessed with Russel as a murderer and as a woman. It is through Winger's relationship with Russel that she discovers her own female side and becomes comfortable with it, incorporating it into her life. By the

end of the film, she is wearing bright colors, attractive clothing and has had an affair. As Russel gradually loses grip with reality, allowing us glimpses into her slight insanity, Winger does just the opposite, becoming more real as the film draws to a close. Their mutual obsession is suggestive of the fact that each woman represents what the other needs: Winger needs Russel's attractiveness, her assurance of her own femininity. Russel needs Winger's sanity and realism.

Despite its shallow plot, the film keeps the viewer guessing until the last minute, twisting and turning in all sorts of unexpected directions. I rate it a 5.

Tin Men ****

Starring Danny DeVito and Richard Dreyfuss

It has been called a "truly American comedy" by reviewers in the newspapers, and I fully agree. Without much on the psychological side, it is a story of a feud and of a way of life in the 1960's. Danny DeVito and Richard Dreyfuss both work for aluminum-siding sales companies, and the hustle of salesmanship enters their personal lives as well. The status involved with owning Cadillacs becomes of utmost importance to them, and preservation of pride absolutely crucial. If you are looking for knee-slapping comedy, though, you're not likely to find it here. The comedy is found more in the humor of common life, in people we all know, and in troubles we all experience.

DeVito plays his typical gruff, smart-ass character with his usual perfection. His character is very realistic and very funny. His life is falling down around his ears: his wife leaves him, he gets evicted and he loses his job, but he manages to maintain his pride. How he does it is an integral part of the film.

Dreyfuss, over the course of the film, acquires a new Caddy and DeVito's wife. He also retains his job and his home. At the end of the film, however, when DeVito's car is impounded by the IRS, both men seem to reach a realization of the fleeting nature of the aluminum-siding world, which had been their lives, and their need to re-define their boundaries concerning their pride and each other.

It is realistic and humorous, but it dragged a bit, and I had problems giving the characters much sympathy. I rate it a 3 1/2.

Mannequin ****

Starring Andrew McCarthy and Kim Cattral

After explaining motivations, plot twists and psychological implications in the preceding reviews, this review is going to seem very thin and shallow. Indeed, reviewing shallow movies has its consequences. An intriguing work of art *Mannequin* may not be, but a cute Saturday-night-date type movie it is.



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May '85
PLAYBOY

If one can ignore the mostly-stereotyped supporting characters and the overdone plot of underdog-makes-big-and-outdoes-the-bad-guys, this modern-day Pinnocchio tale is endearing and funny. Andrew McCarthy carries the movie with his charm, giving an otherwise flat character an essence of realism and just pure loveability. Kim Cattral is beautiful, so we're not disappointed in the romance. She may not be the best actress, but how well does a mannequin need to act? With the horribly overdone yet endearing Hollywood as a supporting character, the trio romp through the plot and carry it along with fun and humor. It is a good movie to see to lift a depression, or just to have fun. I rate it a 4.

Creativity...



... a state of mind



worm days

rapidly rushing feet pounding pelts dropping drips demanding winds whistling
willows suddenly swaying bellowing Gods streaking white night and fromping
throughout growing grey puddles oversized overcoat gentleman's monstrosity
drowning a small frame heavily drooping down reaching ankles rubber roof fat
floppy brim unraveling ragged elbows yellowing souls giant's feet duck feet
flopping lazily along amidst clicking heels conserving crowd strictly sidewalk
sailors scurrying neatly by avoiding drips therefore drops skirting 'round edges
small wet lakes unswum trampling terrified earthworms rushing scurrying
hurrying bustling the child stopping stooping examining wormy fields mutilated
battlegrounds turrents slowly stopping haughty heels hesitating re-establishing
regulating speed the child's pace passing tiny hand groping hat floppily flying legs
pumping escaping sidewalk syndromes catching tripping then fading
long-stemmed grasses despairing daisies clumped heads bending soggily
straining fumbling fingers tugging scattering moist petals unearthing brown roots
releasing so smiling dropping to wet grounds the child picking a flower

Jacquie Beidl

To Dream is Such a Novel Thing...

To dream is such a novel thing
an outlet from our minds
where fantasy can be fulfilled
and being has no time.

A place where we observe ourselves
in settings far and near
in actions that would otherwise
be swept away by Fear.

For in a dream it's not unreal
when falling from the sky
to land into a giant dish
of chocolate pudding pie.

Or maybe you will find yourself
among the birds of feather
soaring in and out of clouds
out over golden heather.

But then again your dream may be
a dream you'd rather miss
for all events before your eyes
are everything but bliss.

Dreams will come and go at will
and none as yet can cage them
for dreams will live as long as man
has mind enough to dream them.

Michael Pray



Dragonquest

The faded light bleeds through gossamer wings
And the beams are all filtered blood red
'Neath the spired tree sits the rider once free
With both humbled and saddened his head.
Drifting down to his ears comes a song the winds sing
Telling the sorrow of a once-living thing.
His mind seeks a solace from the barbarous drone
That speaks of a desolate future alone.
An error in judgement, a chance zephyr breeze
At the remembrance of towering, life-seeking trees.
Their bond so strong broken, a life but a token
The chances of nature so fickle a dame
The memories carried of words yet unspoken
Are lost to death's ravenous pyre of flame.

Terry Maggert



she softly calls my name
gently, she touches my hand
it must be a dream
it is
as always
just the imagination
treading where
forbidden to go
trying to escape
the loneliness
which forms a necktie



Levi Stone

elusive shops

dealers lined up along sidewalk edges potential customers walk by with hardly a glance shop owners do not care mingle among themselves admire goods that cannot be theirs then trade the rest bargain with themselves and do not care when potential customers walk right by one has popularity by a box the others gather around to listen bodies flowing around elbows knees bending to rhythms from the station enjoying a warm day though buried under layers of clothes passing around brown narrow paper sack laughing unconcerned by lack of business we pass by the untended displays of owners who are enjoying the day we look we wonder but do not buy our eyes follow products spread below on papers coffee-stained cover small plastic bags one last shop the dirty tapestry carefully spread goods spread 1976 Reader's Digest a single tie looking up are shocked (this shop scolding of Liberty brochures that once were free ripped umbrella plastic beads a single tie looking up are shocked (this shop scolding thieves) to see a face gray stubble weary eyes begging not to buy not to steal not to touch demands only to look his thin body arches protectively hovers over merchandise sends us away from what he cannot sell from what we cannot buy

Jacque Beidl

Glimpse of Death

I caught a glimpse of death today
in tattered rags he stood
I saw his wrinkled, leathery face
beneath the robe's worn hood.
His face showed no expression,
blank and lonely were his eyes
they seemed so dark and shadowy
like dreary winter skies.
His eyes were focused on the ground
beneath his feet, a grave.
He raised his scythe up toward the sky
the road to heaven he paved.
Then he knelt down and kissed the
mound
to put the soul at ease.
Before he vanished from my sight
he whispered, "Rest in peace."

Shelli Stiverson



I am sitting with a woman
In an office, in a building, on a campus
In a strange and unfamiliar territory
She is telling me of warnings
She is telling me of my capacity
For an hour and a half.
She is saying that having loved the place as a student
She couldn't leave it after a degree of maturity
She blinks her eyes, seeing nothing now but statistics, something
In stone, an imperfection, incomprehensible but dangerous
In 056-68-1326, a blight an idiot but still a child
For a lifetime.

Ed Schuldner



Reaching for the Cookies

We learn how to feel so good
then they tell us it's oh so bad
Refrain, abstain, I think you're mad
to deny possible worlds, you would.

With your arms, your toys, you'll
destroy the peace
then scream and claim your virtue.
Well I've been to places no jet can take
you
and have returned, intact, in one piece.

Floyd Leavy

The Field

The heart seeks the desire untouchable
To walk in the forbidden field
Side by side with the unsightly
To smell what the black flowers yield

The wire is up and the guards are
posted
There will be no trespassing tonight
The dogs are sent to sniff out the guilty
Who play by the ungodly light

And in the darkness the people shiver
For fear of being caught
Confusion is made by the opposite
feelings
Which God Himself has wrought

The sentries came with their eyes aflame
The flames of an unquenchable fire
To kill the ones who hide in the field
To fulfill their own twisted desires

The sentry smiles as the light beam
finds
A handful of those he seeks
And as the shot rings through the air
God begins to weep.

Mary O'Brien

Utopia

The dawn has come, the clouds have dispersed
Above, the sun shines free
Tired faces look about
And smile at what they see

In the field and across the land
The fighting seems to have stopped
The other side has been cut down
Like a freshly harvested crop

But was it really necessary
To fight in such a war
Are we really so much different
Down in our inner core

Still, the deed is done, we can't turn back
Both sides wish to retreat
Across the field the only sound
Is the shuffle of weary feet

The sun goes down and the moon is seen
Behind the whispering trees
And in the field a flower grows
Despite the strangling weeds.

Mary O'Brien

Thoughts of Ancient Ruins

Where comes the shadow which darkens the day
but into my past where it lingers and burns
and wakes dormant harpies who tear at my chest
from the inside
while the outside
is a convincing image of peace
but none of the effort that bites down the fear
silhouettes weeping on moonlit slopes
and names that will haunt me for all of my years.

What is this chill that I feel in the air
did you throw one last jagged doubt at my back
where an open wound does me the most damage
or could you reach?
it's a long toss.
if you were close you may have hit
and I'd be a child; alone and crying
looking for warmth or friendly light
yet there is no rebirth when I find you, but dying.

And what is this revelation before me
another stagnant and mute disjunction
am I so decrepid to indulge such hatred?
can't you tell me?
don't you know?
please try to remember the morning
before all the torment from which we were led.
And what hue is this pool which flows under our feet?
Sanguine? Thank God, for I thought it was red.

Mark Filie

Expectations in Waiting

Outside, the fog creeps up from the tranquil valley below
wrapping itself around the trees and buildings
creating a world of fuzzy shadows and blurred objects.

Soon the rain will start to trickle against the window pane
distorting my picture of the outside world even more—
the rivets of water making my picture run like a ruined
water color that a small child has discarded in the dirt.

Unfamiliar people pass back and forth in the dimly-lit hallway
the sound of music drifts from a faraway room to my ears
across the hall the washer and dryers make their all-too-familiar noise
the day wears on and on, time passes sluggishly, and still I wait.

While sitting in my room the light outside slowly seeps away
one by one the hours of daylight have slowly worn themselves out
replaced by the mysterious darkness which envelopes all
without caring what's what or who's who; it doesn't need to care.

Quietly lights come to life, chasing away the gloom of night.

Passing through these spheres of artificial day is the object of my waiting.

The light softly caresses her dark hair and clings to her body
as she makes her way under the watchful eye of a shrouded moon.

As I sit waiting I think and hope that the coming of the
morning's sunshine will be seen through two sets of eyes
both happily recalling the emergence of the night
and the beginning of another day.

Michael Pray



Baige Parrell

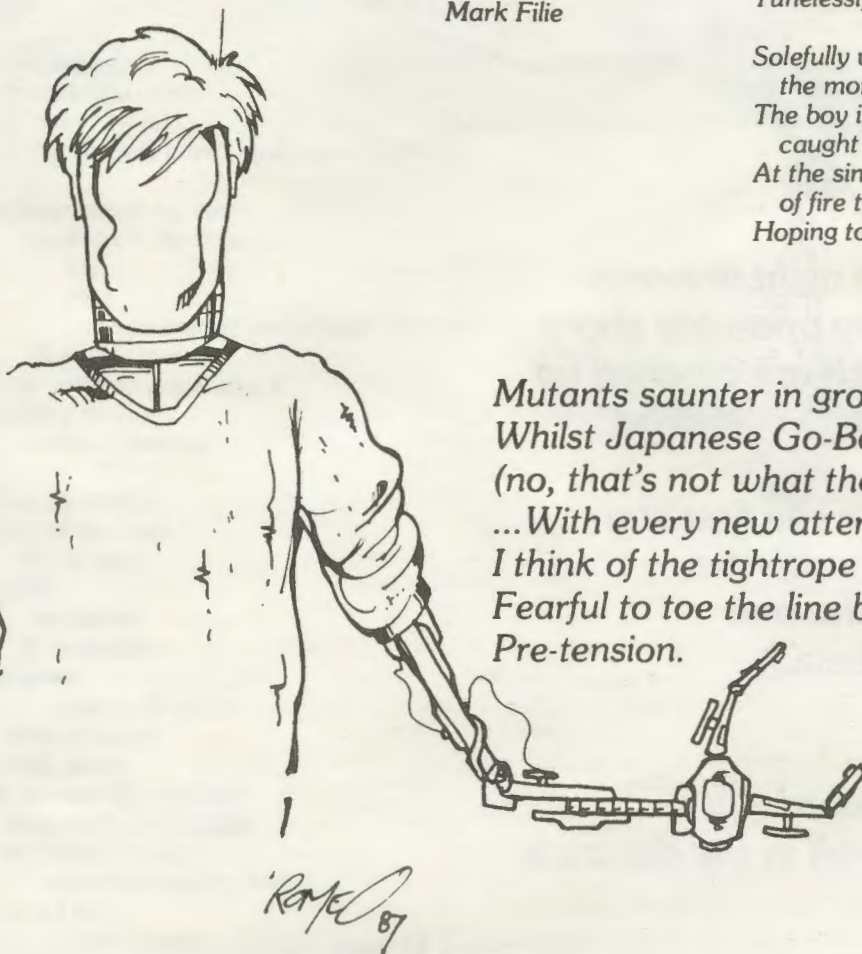
Whose Steel Heart

Who was your fledgling knight in my absence?
Who scorched my pillow by evening
and twisted my nightmares
and teased sleep
until it taunted and hovered above me.
darkness is so cruel
and your voice is so cruel
or was that a knife

You begged for my trust and I for your pain
and now the sky has turned to steel
of course you were pleased to oblige me again
and I lied
this has nothing to do with being hurt
for to think romantic
is to be so naive
It's just all this damn blood.

How can you say that I laughed at your needs
when I never knew what they were
and never cared to ask
am I cold
No. I am dry and spoiled and rancid
Hatred is so warm
and I do need you so
but don't ever dare need me.

Mark Filie



Sirens

As a child he wanted to be
a fireman
Sometimes a doctor
or a lawyer
But most often a fireman

He was an altar boy for
the priests
Routinely pouring waters
diluting wines
Ringing bells at proper times

His community called him
to serve
Instructing in the ways
to save
He was more than an apt pupil

Consciously striving to portray
his devotion
Economizing in expression
and apparel
Carrying a beaten briefcase

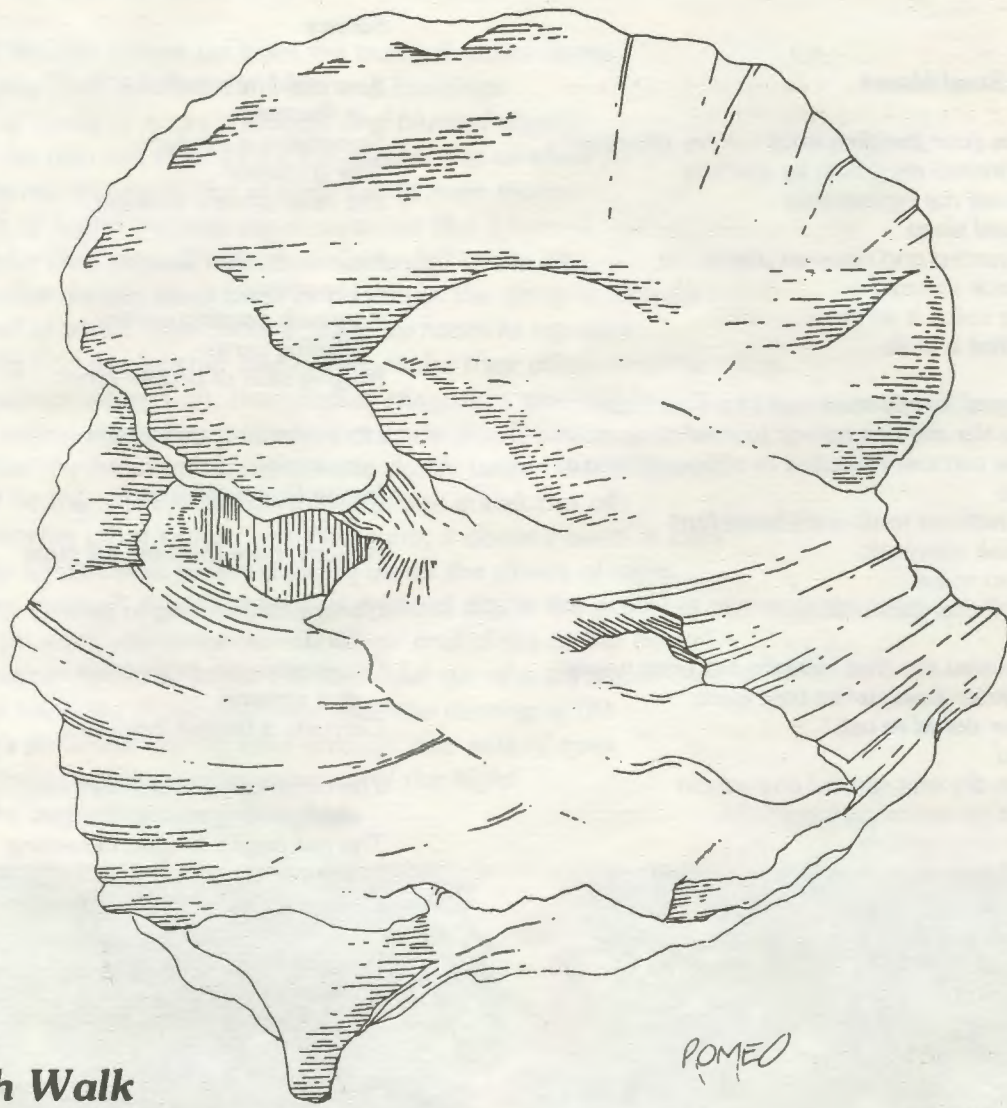
The community that called him
slowly extinguishing
The apt pupil's studies becoming
mere re-runs
Tunelessly laced with bells

Solefully walking in streets of
the morning
The boy in the man discreetly
caught staring
At the sinful red rush
of fire trucks —
Hoping to save more than souls.

Jaquie Beidl

Mutants saunter in gross apoplex...
Whilst Japanese Go-Bots do cheap piroettes...
(no, that's not what they want at all...)
...With every new attempt to raise the pen
I think of the tightrope walker
Fearful to toe the line before the spotlights hit
Pre-tension.

Ed Schuldner



The Beach Walk

Evening has come and the night is warm.
The crash of waves beating upon the shore
reveals tiny creatures which are plucked up
by the passing birds which fly overhead.

Polished stones sparkle like the first stars
just waking from their daily slumber
and shine like the eyes of the one
who walks this stretch of beach
hand in hand
with me
without a word
towards a lighted window off in the distance.

Michael Pray

Songs That Used to Be

*I used to be a street-car conductor
Stokers, monkeys, ticket-men, they made up the band
We would pipe up the music of Resentment
A long-held mournful note passed up by Time's hand*

*I used to be a pogo-stick inspector
Until a brand came out from some demented man
The higher you went up, the harder you would come down
'Til your scalp danced upon the asphalt of Japan*

*I used to be an escalator switchman
But I fell privy to the offering of power
Slipping mescaline in my flagonful of Bosco
Sending people up and down at one-fifty miles an hour*

*I used to be a bowling-pin mechanic's helper
I held the six-pack and the porn mags with chagrin
He dropped a Suzy-Q onto the lane below us
He went to get it back— his skull the eleventh pin*

*We used to be a work force of Contentment
We were exploited and we wanted it that way
As years hang on us, we bear nothing but lamentment
The problem with Progress is it leaves us to stay*

I used to be a sewer-systems tour guide...

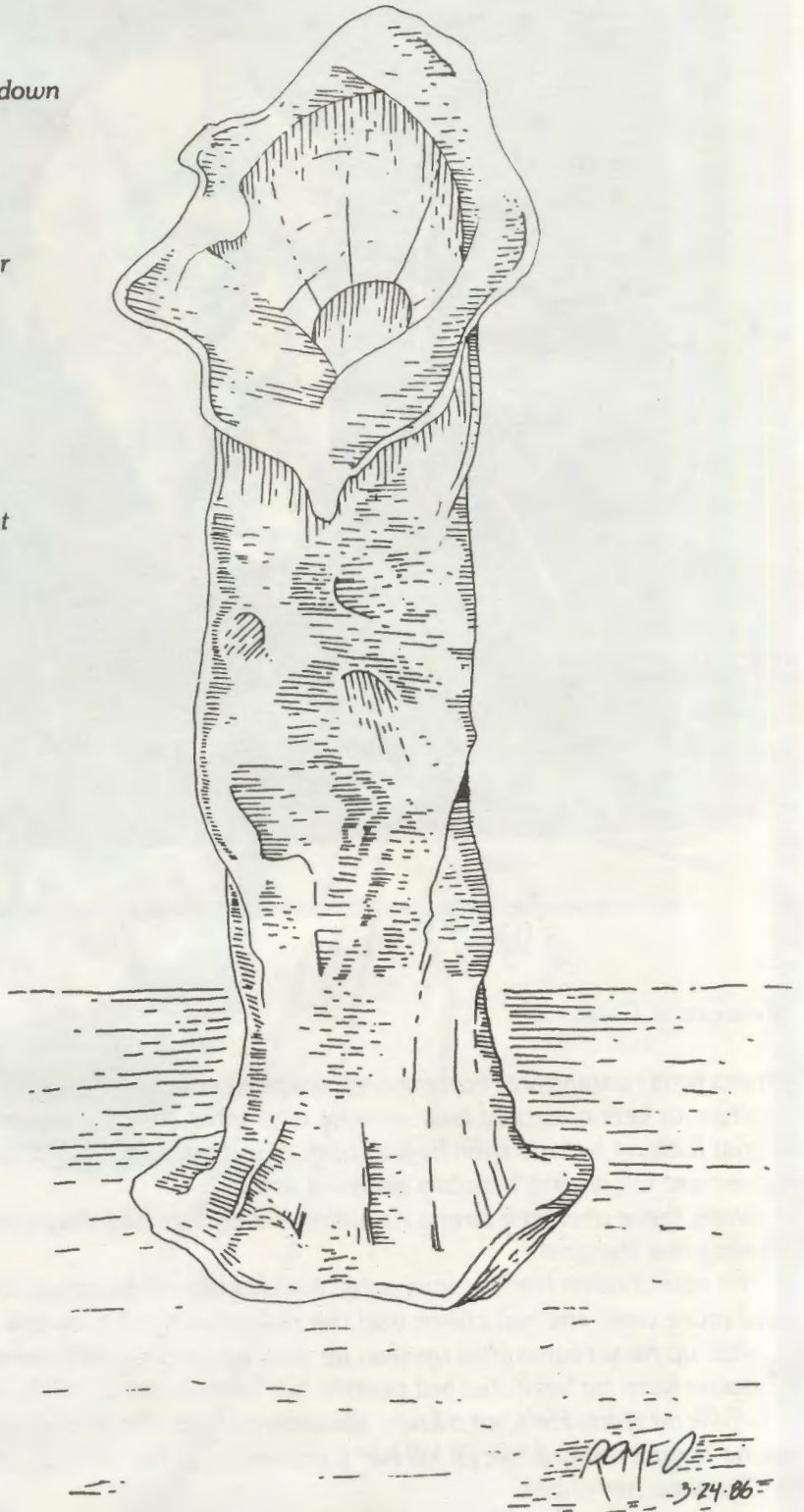
Ed Schuldner

flytrap

*The circumference
with dots in a circle
only singular
with the bounds carefully drawn
like a fly
buzzing 'round my room
landing on my arm
leg
face
moments of undefinable disgust
flicking a hand
the air current dispersing it
if only for a moment
before it returns*

*hanging up a strip
sweet sticky trap
it is drawn
caught
I go to the center
to examine
and gloat
over a dying fly
and as I turn
to walk away
an air current lifts my hair
so a sticky tug yanks
at my roots
stops my moving feet
and I too
am caught*

Jaquie Beidl





Reluctant Criminal

*sirens he is running feet hammering legs pumping cars passing gawking turning the corner it is his neighborhood
leather jackets quarts of beer generic cigarettes collapsing porches*

*just looking he said then he just took it and got scared. He had broken away and now he just runs runs runs
pavement unyielding beneath slapping soles*

*steps three at a time sirens rounding the corner had they seen him his mother looks up bursts into hysterics
wailing like the sirens*

*the sound turns his fear into panic into anger and he takes his hand slaps her hard, cheek flashes pink prints
and more wails the red cheek and the red lights are his visions*

*shut up he screams shut up shut up shut up he drowns it out as his nails dig into her arm Jesus Christ shut up
doors slam he hesitates but pushes her hard to get by to the kitchen scrambles for the knife she wails louder
footfalls on stairs He's got a knife, she warns them, the throbbing cheek reminds her whose side she should be on
as he lunges toward her I'll kill her if you come in but he only drops the knife and*

Touches her cheek

Laurie A. Haelen



fiction fiction fiction fiction fiction fiction

Foley

by Michael Hill

Foley left the drill on again overnight. I came in this morning to the sound of it whirring into thin air as it lay on its side on the workbench.

This really stinks.

Here's Foley. Foley taught me how to fish years ago, showed me the little tricks that really aren't so little and make the difference between a guy who fishes and a fisherman. He explained to me how bass feed in shallow water by lily pads and how trout look for dead insects in the deep pools carved out by running streams shortened by a waterfall. Foley taught me a book of knowledge that I doubt he even remembers anymore.

Now here's Foley aligning some kid's '78 Pinto like the old pro he is and then

balling up the next car so badly that I have to work on it all over again after he's through with it. I'm staying late at the garage just about every night now because I just can't seem to bring myself to confront Foley with the sad fact which I suspect he already knows, deep down.

"Hey, Foley, seeing how you're slipping away, why not just pack it in and hang out doddering at the park for a few years until you finally waste away. God knows you're doing more harm than good here." Too cruel.

You'd never think a thing like this would happen to Foley, at least I never would. When we played in the town softball league together, it was hard to believe that I was playing with a guy

almost three times my age. Really. Foley, a vital guy, never slowing down, always with that stupid, shifty grin that seems to have faded with his mind.

I know just how he'll react. He'll shout and rant and call me a traitor and in a sense he'd be right, since it was he who gave me this job in the first place. But what can I do? Every week there's less and less of him and I'm afraid of crushing him.

Crush him? What about me? It's seven o'clock on a Monday night and I just finished draining wiper fluid out of a crank-case. I've got two fingers on my wrist checking my pulse rate and it's scaring the hell out of me.

Lipnock

by Joseph Erbal

Lipnock slowly sensed the drug taking effect. It was some unpronounceable chemical discovery whose effects were hard to describe—he fancied he was drifting from his body without leaving it. He could still sense everything being done to him on the metal table, more than ever before, but with a detachment that made him immune to pain. The doctors were working over him as he lay there, paralyzed except for some ancillary muscles. He could speak, though in a low respiratory croak, and could still vaguely wiggle his toes and twitch his nose.

"Hey, doc," he said to no doc in particular as they were slicing into his chest, "am I wiggin' my ears?" They assured him that he was. After a little while the heart pump had been attached and the respirator was prepared to take over his lungs when they failed. Thus with the continued circulation of oxygen to the brain insured, even after his body should give out, the remainder of the procedure could begin.

His head had been shaved and sculpted with lines. Now, while he muttered in curiosity, Lipnock's scalp was sliced down to the bone and peeled away. An advanced laser scalpel that fried the blood vessels and capillaries shut as it went was used, causing minimal blood loss. However, its beam was not fine enough to kill the exposed nerves; his brain felt waves and waves of searing pain, which the drug calmed into an interesting phenomenon: "Hey, ya know, that hurts like hell but I don't even mind."

Dust and smoke flew and were sucked away by the vacuum as the surgeons removed his skull, plate by bony plate. He watched them remove the bloody bits and felt misgivings. "So yer really takin' it apart, eh? Wow."

Lipnock felt a twinge of regret, not over the surgery, but over killing the old bastard. If he'd done otherwise, he would not be on this table right now. Why had he volunteered for this? Well, he had reasoned, if he helped others through the procedure he would go the way of all good folks: he was going to go

to heaven.

"So yer really doin' it, eh guys?"

"Yes, we are," said the chief of the doctors. "We'll ask you to keep talking now, Mr. Lipnock. It will be the only way we can find out what effect we're having. Do you feel this?"

There was a painful tweak as they inserted a long prod between some folded lobes of his brain. "Jeez, that's weird, doc. I can feel it goin' right in, right in."

"It's in the valleys between parts of your brain. How's this one?"

"Rrrrrr..." he growled. "I just felt like my legs wanted to jump, doc. Try pinchin' my legs. No, I can't feel it." He watched motionlessly as one of the doctors took a heavy mallet—much like the one he'd brained his uncle with after the argument—and broke his shin. He heard the popping of bone as it splintered under the blows.

"This is creepy!" he wailed, astonished. "Wow. No, I didn't feel it, but I watched. I just lay here 'n watched. I sure am suffering. Boy, am I suffering."

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Mr. BIG

by Michael Hill



A rain of bullets tore the stoolie's flesh asunder as he fell to the ground.

"Aarrrrggghhhh!" he screamed. "A rain of bullets is tearing my flesh asunder!"

That's justice. Justice is a million fat bankrolls and the constant threat of a stomach full of hot lead or steel or aluminum or whatever they're making bullets out of these days and that's Mr. Big's biggest asset and that's why he's so big.

Mr. Big on the docks. Mr. Big on the street corners. Mr. Big on the steel or aluminum girders of half-built buildings. Mr. Big in a private room behind the candy store in your own neighborhood. Mr. Big: the head honcho, the top banana, the big cheese, the high muck-a-muck whenever he walks into a room.

"Greetings, boys, the High Muck-a-Muck's here," he says, walking into a room of lawyers or builders or congressmen or businessmen or whatever type of person he deals with these days.

Me and Mr. Big driving through his city and me always eight feet ahead of him because I'm in the driver's seat, driving him wherever he wants to go, maybe to some congressman on the docks or some lawyer in the private room behind the candy store in your own neighborhood. Right now Mr. Big wants me to drive us into the sunset just like in the movies but I can't find the sun through the damned skyscrapers.

The Game

The Game had very specific rules and went along the following lines: indulging themselves in a journey, passengers in a vehicle on the highway would peel their eyes for license plates from other states. On seeing one, the first passenger to call "out of state license plate" in firm, solid tones claimed that particular one for his or her own and then got the right to playfully punch someone in the car. This got them one (1) point. At the end of the trip, whoever had the most points won. Joseph and Tammy were avid scholars and devotees of The Game, and they played to win.

They were careening down the interstate. Tammy had good eyes and quick reflexes: she was steadfast, stubborn, an inflexible liar and was determined to clutch victory in her grasp. "Out of state license plate!" she said, nudging Joseph in his side as he drove. He accelerated to pass more cars, in search of out of state license plates to claim for his own.

"Out of state license plate!" he suddenly called, nudging her back. Her lips tightened.

"Out of state license plate!" she cried, punching him in the shoulder.

"Out of state license plate!" he roared, slapping her across the face.

"Out of state license plate!" she shrieked triumphantly, poking him in the eye.

Witnesses said the car suddenly began to weave back and forth across the road. Then it gained speed and unexpectedly hurtled across the shoulder and through the highway barrier into the grasslands beyond, rolling over and throwing debris in every direction. Cars screeched to a halt, a policeman was flagged down. Ambulances came and the bent metal glimmered with red lights. One passenger, the woman, was still alive. The driver was dead. As they cut her from the wreckage her heart began to give out, but she struggled to the end to get out her final words. Gasping, she whispered as she died, "Trucks don't count."

by

Joseph

Erbal

lipnock

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They nodded among themselves. Part of the reason they had wanted him to volunteer for the procedure in the first place was his simple understanding of the universe, his flat adherence to one overpowering idea or emotion at a time, which ruled his every act of will. He felt an urge to hit his uncle, so he did. He wanted to go to heaven by expiation, so he volunteered. No regrets, ever—no real remorse, no Freudian superego to suppress him. He was perfect. He lay on the table.

"Scalpel."

"Y'now, I've been a pretty ordinary guy, right? Loved mom and dad, raised tough, did up a lot of girls. Plain and ordinary, yep. Hey, was that part of it? I don't feel no different. Well, I think I was sort of normal. But jeez, it was hard sometimes. I remember this kid who used to beat the hell out of me once a week, like clockwork, till I took a board with a nail in it and creamed him.

Hard times, but I went straight for what I needed, and..."

He heard *thunk!* as they dropped something in the bowl.

"And — gosh! It's gone. I don't remember none of it. My God, what a — it's like a slice of me is gone."

The doctors worked harder. He seemed less upset than astounded as more slices of his memory vanished. More bits of tissue were delicately excised. Then they shifted their attention, and his chatter began to slow.

"Yes... Course. Why'd I have to hit the old man?... Was there any point to callin' him a bastard when I said I needed the money?... I told you guys I loved mom and dad... What is love? Emotion's just... a word... Reality... is itself, without no meaning except what emotion gives it..."

The doctors looked at him, interested. Elimination of the emotion-generating centers unleashed the philosopher in

Lipnock. Perhaps for the first time in his life he was rational. The storm no longer ruled in him. They kept cutting. Lipnock, detached, feeling every move of the laser scalpel, ground the words out.

"Hey, I can't hear nothin'. Not even that little machine that goes beep. Am I talking?" One of the nurses motioned for him to keep going. After a while his heart and lungs suddenly gave out and the machines kicked in. He might now be ruled technically dead, but the rules were ambiguous in the case of prisoners who'd chosen to suffer their executions in medical experimentation rather than in the chair. Lipnock had wanted to suffer, do good and go to heaven. But now his suffering was over in the most immediate sense; he'd lost all feeling to his body, since they'd gotten at that part of his brain that did the feeling.

Reality was disintegrating. He felt his thoughts disconnecting from each other. "Blue Momma and her sphygmomanometer. Emotion, right? They say the brain's a computer; it sucks up gasoline and makes babies in the spaghetti sauce. Uncle said it when he locked the baseball bat just like the hammer. Where's momma? Where's momma?"

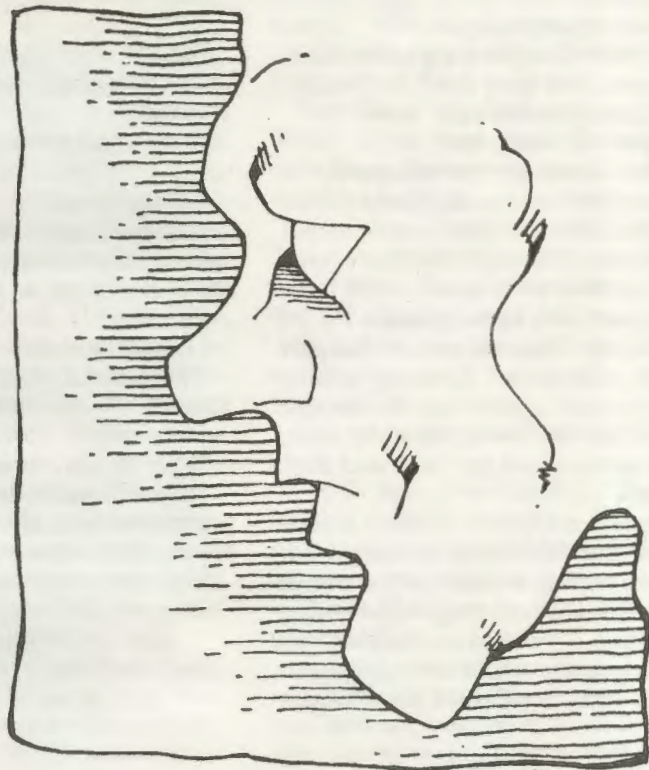
Then he was blind as well, his snap-

continued on 21

ping reason trapped in a lightless, soundless cosmos. "Is this heaven? Hi. You must be God."

His lips spluttered as the doctors continued slicing at his deep parts. *Thunk! Thunk!* The machines hummed and beeped, but the part that did the hearing lay in the bowl now, pale and bloody. For a while his lips quivered, but Lipnock was already gone. All he had really been lay in chunks in the bowl, oozing red liquid. For a few minutes the parts would keep trying to talk to each other in half-syllables of fragmentary reality, but they would slowly go stale and the last bits of Lipnock would cease to be, as the coherent entity of Lipnock already had.

Experiment successful.



APME 87

Rooked

by Michael Hill

—Well? You got one?
—uuuuuuuh.
—Yeah?
—I guess... it's kind of... No. Forget it.
—C'mon.
—No. I don't think so.
—Why not?!

—I don't know. I... just don't feel like it.
—C'mon, tell it! You heard my story.
—Yeah, but this one's different.
—Prove it.
—No. Sorry.
—C'mon! Please?
—...
—C'mooooon.
—...Okay, but I swear to God if I hear any of your smart-ass comments I'm pulling the car over and kicking you out.
—Sure.
—I'm serious, Gary, I mean it.
—Really. So am I.
—Right. Well, it pretty much started on a crosstown bus this summer, after work.
—Where?
—On Clinton. I got on and took a seat on the back like I always do. There's like nobody on the bus, and I'm wearing that really cool plaidish shirt I have with the pink and aqua on it. You know the one?
—I don't think so.
—You've seen it, pink and aqua squares.

It's plaid.

—I can't remember...

—Well, you'd remember it if you saw it; it was this really cool shirt. So anyway, I'm wearing it just sitting down reading the paper when I notice- I can feel- that there's someone sitting next to me like there's not enough empty seats on the bus or something.

I'm about to flash whoever it is the evil eye until I take a gander at her; she was a real eyeful. You know what Jane Pauley looks like?

—The one in the morning?

—Right. She looks just like her, only about ten years younger and she dresses better— really hot in this all-black, one-piece cotton dress and those white leather sandals that all the girls wore last summer. I mean I just smiled at her and went back to reading the same sentence in my newspaper about a hundred times when all of a sudden she starts making conversation about how she loves the hot weather because it makes her feel so vital and I'm sitting there all smiles and charm agreeing with her and occasionally making some comments of my own...

—“Why yessirree! It certainly is hot out, yes indeedy!”

—Gary, I swear I'll pull over.

—Okay, I'm sorry.

—So we're talking for a while when she starts telling me how much she likes my shirt and where could she buy one just like it. I told her it was a gift from I don't know where and she looks into space for a few seconds and then to me and she offers to buy the shirt off me for \$35.

—Ha.

—No kidding. And I'm like I'd like to do it but I'm thinking that I'd look pretty stupid sitting on a bus without a shirt. That's when she tells me that if I were to get off at the next stop with her she'd give me a T-shirt to wear along with the \$35 if I were to go up to her apartment with her. So I'm thi— Hey! Check it out, only 140 miles to go.

—Perfect; we should get there just a little after midnight.

—Great. So anyway I decide to go ahead and do it. I mean why not? The worst thing that could happen is that I'd make \$35.

—So where was this apartment?

—In Park Slope somewhere. It was a real nice place, nice even though it was really old. It was a five-story walk-up and the whole way up the stairs she was walking and talking really close to me like...

continued on 22

rooked

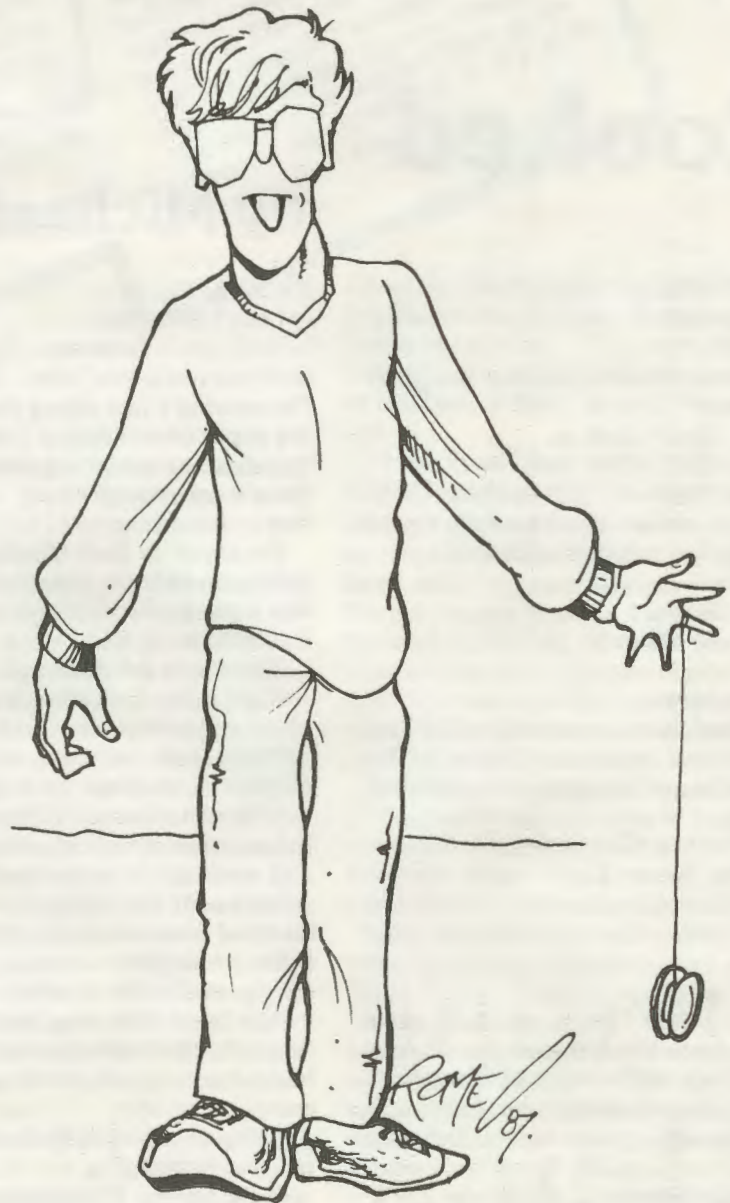
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—Did she try anything?
—Not then. But the look in her eyes, you know, *that* kind of look. I wish I could show it to you right now.
—I'm glad you can't.
—Funny. So we get into her apartment and I just start taking off my shirt while she goes into the next room to get another one. I'm standing there for a while bare-chested when she walks back in, all smiles, with a grungy white T-shirt in her hands. I can still picture this part perfectly: she comes up to me holding the T-shirt out. I grab it but she doesn't let go. I just pull her in, nice and calm, put my arm around her back and start on with it.
—Sounds like a bunch of fun.
—It was! But then something happened. We were fooling around on the couch for I don't know how long— and having a good time— when all of a sudden, out of the blue, she starts crying, I mean really bawling, and I don't know why.
—Well?
—Well, I start asking her what's the matter but it's hard to hear her through the sobbing. I mean, in a way I didn't even really care what the hell her problem was but I thought it would be pretty rude just to up and leave and besides, maybe she was crying because of something I did.
—Was she?
—No. She started explaining to me how her old boyfriend was really rough on her, even in bed, and how she was really turned on by me but the memory of her boyfriend was just making her too tense. She said if I could just help her relax she'd love to sleep with me...
—And?
—She said she wanted to play a few games of chess.
—What? It sounded like you said "chess."
—I did. Chess.
—You mean chess as in the board game?
—Right. Chess. In the nude. It's like forep— Gary! If you don't stop laughing I swear to God I'll pull over right now!
—Okay, okay, I'm sorry. Really. But you gotta admit it sounds ludicrous!
—No, no... it's full of sexual overtones... the attack... infiltrating the other player's territory... it's quite sensual.
—I suppose... if you're a sexual nerd.
—Shut up.
—All right, what happened next?
—Why should I tell you, smart-ass?
—C'mon Jay! Don't be that way... you brought me along this far.

—...
—Please?
—... nothing happened.
—What?!

—After a few games I made a move for her...
—Off the board?
—Off the board. When I reached for her she started to scream rape at the top of her lungs, so I had to run out.
—Oh, God.
—I know, I know.
—That's awful... but at least you made \$35.
—Not really.
—What do you mean?
—I mean she won her money back. To add excitement, she suggested we play for two dollars for each captured piece.
—You made nothing?

—Actually, I kind of lost twenty dollars or so. It's hard to concentrate on a game when your opponent's nude.
—And the shirt?
—I didn't have time to grab it on my way out— I barely had time to dress!
—You're an idiot.
—Gary, I warned you...
—You're an idiot! You're supposed to tell me a good sex story and the best you can do is tell me how you were dumb enough to get conned out of twenty bucks and some goddamned paisley shirt!
—Plaid.
—I'm driving with an idiot. No wait, you're making this up, right?
—I warned you! I'm slowing down!
—Jay, I think you're slow enough as it is...



It's a bright, sunny Saturday and he's stuck in a tiny room with a snapping, hostile scrap of a woman. Can a 17-year-old kid actually learn to enjoy this?



Visiting Hours

by

looked back at Tim and said to the nurse, "Why don't you go overdose some of the other cronies and leave me to my visitor?"

Tim closed his eyes and prayed for death. He'd even settle for a simple code blue. The nurse patted him on the shoulder and left.

"So," Mrs. Dennelman said, looking Tim over slowly. He stood awkwardly, half-in and half-out of the room. "Why the hell are you here?"

"Uh," he stammered, shifting his weight from one foot to the other. "School," he spat out.

"I'm an assignment?" she half laughed.

"Well, no. Not really." Tim was looking down as he spoke. He wished he was sitting; he couldn't stand up to her stare much longer.

"Then I'll ask again. Why the hell are you here?"

Tim rolled his eyes and exhaled slowly. "Well, uh, see, I'm taking this class, see, and uh, volunteer work is one of the requirements." He glanced up to see if she was still staring at him. She was. He returned his gaze to the yellowing tiles. "And, well, so this was on the list and I, uh, choose it."

Mrs. Dennelman considered this for a moment. "Stupid choice," she said finally.

Tim shrugged. He hadn't actually chosen it. He'd been out that day and it got assigned to him because no one else would choose it. He understood why.

The old woman looked at him closely. He wouldn't raise his eyes to meet hers. "So what's your name?"

"Tim."

"Got that the first time around. Last name, kid."

"Fitzpatrick."

"Not a bad name."

"I have no problems with it," he said, daring to raise his gaze to meet hers. She half smiled at him.

"So what'd you come to 'visit' about?" she asked, wheeling herself over to a small window overlooking the parking lot. "Great view, huh?"

Tim entered the room and moved over to the window slowly. He looked past her. "Super," he lied.

continued on 26

**Laurie
Thurston**

"Mrs. Dennelman?" the nurse blinked once and raised her voice. "Mrs. Dennelman, your medication!"

Tim stood slightly behind the nurse as if he was protecting himself. He wished he was anywhere but here. It was Saturday, for Christssake.

The woman the nurse was calling raised her head, faced the nurse squarely and fixed on her an unwavering gaze. "I'm old, not deaf."

Tim laughed out loud. He raised his closed fist to his mouth and began to cough. Mrs. Dennelman's eyes shifted beyond the nurse, onto Tim. He coughed once more and was silent, moving closer to the nurse.

"Time for your medication," the nurse repeated automatically. She entered the small room and hovered professionally. It was making Tim uncomfortable to watch her; he imagined how annoying it must have been for that old lady.

"You know," Mrs. Dennelman said, taking the small white paper cup containing two blue pills from the nurse's unwavering hand, "the amount of crap you force down our throats around here makes me wonder if you're not trying to get rid of all of us to make your life easier." She tipped her head back and tossed the pills into the back of her throat, waving away the offer of water to wash them down. "Ahh," she said, "now that hits the spot."

"Very good, Mrs. Dennelman."

"Now do I get a lollypop? Or only after I learn how to tie my shoes— or shoe, should I say?" she looked down at her right leg, rudely interrupted at the knee.

"Now, now, Mrs. Dennelman. No need for such talk," the nurse chided.

Mrs. Dennelman waved her hand again to quiet the nurse and focused her attention on Tim, who was doing his best not to have any attention focused on him.

"Who's the kid?" she snapped.

Oh, God, Tim thought, shrinking.

"Why, this is Tim," the nurse introduced. "He's going to visit with you this afternoon."

Mrs. Dennelman relieved Tim of the burden of her stare and dumped it back on the nurse. "Who the hell asked me if I wanted any visitors?"

"Now, now, Mrs. Dennelman—"

"Jesus, is that all you can say?" She

So I'm walking along for the longest time before this big black pickup stops about a hundred yards up the road. I knew that it would, because I'm wearing this low-cut red shirt and I kind of leaned forward when it want by to show some cleavage. That always works when I really need a ride. I don't like to do it, and I know that Mom wouldn't approve, but when your legs are giving out and your Dr. Scholl's just ain't doing the trick, you gotta do what you gotta do.

Anyway, it's getting kind of cold and it acts like it's going to rain as I step up into the cab and slam the door. The truck is a little scummy, so I expect the driver to be a real winner, but when I look over at him he is a clean-looking guy with reddish hair and a trimmed beard.

probably about five, and she was bringing me home from somewhere, kindergarten, I guess. Anyway, we stayed there for a long time, just talking, even after the rain stopped. She told me all about how she met Dad, and we talked about dresses, new shoes, sewing and other big-girl stuff, and had a really good time. Afterwards, she got me an ice cream and I spilled some of it on my clothes. I thought she would get mad at me but she didn't. She just smiled and said she was a caring mother; she'd use Tide on my clothes and that would get the stain out.

Then she jerked me out of the car, slapped me hard across the face and left me alone on the side of the road.

"There's a gas station about two miles up, if I remember correctly," says the man. I don't know if there is or not,

Shades Motel, except a couple of letters look like they fell off a long time ago—the first "s" and the "l." He pulls in and turns off the truck.

"Well," I say quickly, "Thanks for the ride."

"Hey, where you going?" He starts to scoot over toward me. I reach to open my door but it doesn't budge. I nudge it and then pound on it but nothing happens.

"Doesn't open from the inside," he says. He's getting closer to me but I can't tell if he's trying to help or if he's trying something else, so I roll down the window real fast, grab the outside latch and fall out of the truck. I can feel his fingers brush my ass before I hit the ground.

"Hey— where you going? Come back!"

ELECTRA by Scott Dalrymple

"Where you headed?" he asks.

"To Mamarose," I say quietly, shifting a length of rope out from under me that was on the seat when I got in.

"Never heard of it. Where's that?"

"Oh, it's just the other side of the city," I answer.

"Yes," he says slowly, "I guess I have heard the name before. Been there a couple of times." I figure that he hasn't but I don't say anything.

I massage my legs with my fingers because they're starting to feel sore now that I've sat down. I hear thunder over the noise of the truck and think that it's a good thing I got a ride when I did. All I have with me is a light sweater, and it wouldn't do me much good out in the rain. Especially at night, because the nights are getting colder.

As we're riding I see drops of water start to smack the windshield and after a while I wonder when he's going to turn on the wipers. Pretty soon I can't see anything and I'm getting scared, because I'm sure he can't see either.

"Wipers not working again," he says blandly. "Have to stop the first place there's a gas station. Never can get the damn things to work myself."

He doesn't look at me when he talks, and I don't know whether to believe him or not. I know that I don't remember him trying to turn them on, but I guess that doesn't mean anything.

I remember one time when Mom and I were riding in the car and it rained so hard that we had to pull over to the side of the road. I was just a little girl then,

so I just nod.

"Hey, why are you going to... where you're going?"

"I'm going to see my mother," I tell him.

He laughs. "You just don't strike me as the momma's-girl type. Does your mother know that you're hitchhiking?"

"I can take care of myself."

"I bet you can."

We hit a bump in the road and my head gets thrown backward, knocking into a pump shotgun on a rack behind me.

"You know," he says, "during the week I would have to be a bit less hospitable. You're lucky you caught me on my day off."

"Why?"

He smirks. "Because I'm a police officer. Hitchhiking's against the law. If I was doing my duty I'd have to run you in."

"Are you going to?" I ask.

"I don't think so," he replies. "I think we can work something out that might be agreeable to both of us."

I don't like the tone of his voice. I glance over at him and see a pair of handcuffs hanging from one of his belt loops. The rain has let up now, and we've gone at least five miles with no gas station in sight, so I say I think that I'd like to get out now.

"Aw, don't say that, honey— hey, look, there's a place just ahead." Through the foggy windshield I can see something up the road. As we get closer, I see a big sign out front that says

But I don't look back until I'm far up the road and out of breath and then I look back but I don't see him coming after me... it's almost dark so I suppose he could sneak up on me but I would probably hear him if he did, and I don't hear anything.

So out of breath. God, my mother would have a field day with this. She always told me not to hitchhike because I would end up like this. I'm having trouble walking because I lost a shoe, so I take off the other one and go barefoot. The gravel on the shoulder of the road hurts my feet, but right now I don't care. I'm more worried about making sure nobody's behind me.

Mom would be worried sick if she knew about this. She always said that I would be the death of her. One time I got a ride home from a basketball game or something with a friend, and I thought she would go through the roof. She told me never, ever to ride with anybody else because it was dangerous. She was so protective that she never let me do anything with my friends. I didn't grow up normal like the other kids because I had a weird mother. Dad always pleaded with her to ease up on me, but she would never quit. She was always nagging at me about something, like my clothes were too tight or my grades were bad or whatever she could think of.

Sometimes I used to want to kill her. I didn't really want to do it myself, though.

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"Yeah, if you like watching a bunch of doctors a third your age park their BMW's in reserved spots." She turned away from the window. "So?"

"Hmmm?"

"What'd you come to visit about?"

"Oh," Tim said, stepping back again. He looked around the small room. The dull paint on the walls was bubbling and cracking in spots. A rigid bed occupied one corner of the room, but the steel bars and supports negated any sense of warmth or comfort it may have offered. A small bureau stood against the wall opposite the bed. Some pictures were scattered around and there was a small box as well. There were no rugs in the room; Tim supposed it was because of the wheelchair.

"It ain't a condo," she commented, watching him.

"It's okay."

"It's a shit hole."

Tim laughed again.

Mrs. Dennelman rolled her chair away from the window and over toward the bed. "Sit down," she ordered the boy. "You'll have to settle for this. Don't got any chairs. Never had a visitor before." Tim sat.

"So tell me," she crossed her arms

over her chest. "How old are you?"

"Seventeen."

"Seventeen," she repeated slowly.

"Jesus."

"How old are you?"

"None of your goddamn business."

Tim snapped his mouth shut. Terrific, he thought. He shifted on the too-stiff mattress, trying to get more comfortable. Unsuccessful. How was he going to spend the afternoon? Maybe she had surgery scheduled or something, he hoped.

"Eighty-nine."

"Huh?" Tim looked at her.

"What, are you deaf? Jesus, seventeen and he's already losing his hearing. It's that goddamn rock music you kids listen to. I said," she repeated, raising her voice like the nurse had done earlier, "I'm eighty-nine!" She blinked. "As if it was any of your business," she added as an afterthought.

It was Tim's turn: "Jesus, eighty-nine."

"Yep, and in two months and three days I'll be the big 9-0. They'll probably throw me a big party and I'll die of cardiac arrest trying to blow out all those damn candles."

Tim laughed again.

"What are you studying in school? What grade you in?"

"I'm a senior. I want to be a doctor," Tim said. "I think."

"A doctor?" Mrs. Dennelman raised her eyebrows.

"I don't know for sure. There are worse things, I guess."

"There are a hell of a lot of better ones."

Tim suddenly got off the bed, crossed the small room, and went over to the window again. "You know," he started, watching the cars pull into and out of the parking lot below, "I don't have to be here. As a matter of fact," he turned away from the window and faced the old woman squarely, "I don't I even want to be here."

Mrs. Dennelman studied his face. "So leave."

Tim stared back at her and then moved towards the door.

"Wait a minute," she said to his back.

"What?" He had his hand on the doorknob, waiting to be set free.

"What about your class?"

Tim said nothing.

"Well," she paused. "I can't let you

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I always wished I had a little brother or somebody that I could get to do it. Then they could take the blame.

When I had my breakdown, the doctor said that it was all because of my mother and that I just couldn't come to terms with her. He was right when he blamed my mother, but I think that she was the one who couldn't come to terms with me. She never got along with me. Always resented me. One time she drove needles up under my fingernails until I passed out. She said it was because I had ruined her life and now she was going to ruin mine. I think she resented me because I took her away from her life with Dad. He says not to worry about that, because I didn't take her away from him. He says things like that all the time to make me feel better, but I know deep inside that she still resents me, even if she doesn't say it as much anymore.

Anyway, I don't have as many problems coming to terms with her now. I just spent six months in a mental hospital and I really feel like it helped me. Things don't bother me now like they used to; I guess I'm more embarrassed about the whole deal than anything else. I don't want anybody to know why I've been away so long, so I decided to hitch my way home instead of having somebody drive all that way to get me. They would all look at me like I was some kind of lunatic if they found out that I was in a nuthouse—that's what Mom calls it, but I don't resent her for that now. She didn't come to visit me like Dad did, but he says that she really missed me so I'm going to see her.

I'm pretty far up the road now and there's no sign of the man in the black truck, so I guess he didn't chase me. I've got my sweater on, but it's not doing much good. I tried to knit a sweater once, but I just couldn't figure out how. Mom could knit anything, but she never wanted to help me.

She never did like me. I remember one time I was having a big birthday party at our house. All of my friends were there and she made a big chocolate cake and we had lots of ice cream and stuff. I blew out all the candles and opened my presents, and she clapped and clapped and smiled like she was enjoying it. Then when it was time for the birthday spanks, all the kids chased me down and finally caught me.

When I saw Mom walking toward me with a horsewhip, I didn't think much of it. Usually I just got light pops on my

behind for how old I was—one to be good on, one to grow on, one to eat brussel sprouts on, and all that. But this time she pulled my pants right down and she whipped me with that thing long after all the kids had left. I still have the scars from that birthday.

Another time she broke both my arms with a baseball bat, and she would have killed me if I hadn't run to the house across the road. My doctor says

had to tell her about the terrible things my mother did to me when I was growing up, like locking me in the closet and cutting off all my hair.

"But why do you think that your mother hated you?" the lady always asked me.

"Because she does," I would answer. "I don't know why. I never did anything to her—I think that she never wanted a child in the first place. When I was born

"... I finally realize that there isn't anything wrong with *me*. I'm not the one who is deranged. I'm not the one who did anything wrong. I'm perfectly normal; it's *Mom* who's crazy."

she never did that, that I only imagined it. He says I imagine a lot of things about Mom because I can't come to terms with her—that's his favorite phrase, "coming to terms"—but I don't see how somebody can imagine two broken arms. And I'm not imagining the scars, either.

Anyway, right now all that matters is that I'm walking along this long boring road and it's cold and dark. After you walk for a while you don't feel tired because you get a second wind, but when the pain comes back it's worse than it was before. I've walked a long ways now, because not many people want to pick up hitchhikers these days. I usually wouldn't be this tired, but in the hospital they only allowed me to walk down the halls and I'm really out of shape now.

There was this one lady there who was very nice to me. She wasn't a doctor; I think she was a nurse's aid or something. She didn't talk to me like a child like the doctors always did. I felt really out of place there, but she made me feel better about myself. There weren't many women there at all. Most of the patients were fat-faced old men who walked around flinging their boogers on the furniture, so it was nice to have a friend.

There was one thing that irritated me about her, though. She always wanted to talk about my mother. The reason I was there in the first place was to get away from my mother, but this lady wouldn't shut up about her. I always

I ruined her life."

"No," the lady would say. "She wanted you very badly. She had even been told that it would be very difficult for her to have a child, and that there was a chance that she might even die in childbirth, but she wanted you badly enough to take that risk."

"Well, I don't see why she didn't treat me better if she wanted me so bad. Somebody should have reminded her after I was born." One time I thought of a good point and I said, "If my mother loves me so much, then why doesn't she come to see me?"

She didn't have an answer for that one. She didn't want to say that Mom hated me.

But that all seems like a long time ago and I feel a lot better about everything now. I didn't want to go to the hospital at first, but now I'm kind of glad that I did because it really helped me to understand things. I finally realize that there isn't anything wrong with me. I'm not the one who is deranged. I'm not the one who did anything wrong. I'm perfectly normal; it's *Mom* who's crazy. Well, maybe she's not exactly crazy, but she's not all there. I've gotten so I feel more sorry for her than anything. That's why I'm going to see her. Maybe we can finally bury all of our problems and start a new life. I would like that.

I know that I need her, and she needs me. There was this one girl I knew in sixth grade who didn't have a mother

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DANCING

After four years of military travel, the great message Kevin Taube carries back to the Krenzlers' brick two-story is that one night, sober at an all-branches bash in Denmark, he danced three slow numbers with the woman who was to become Miss November. He answers Lena Krenzer's balmy embrace with the beginning of his story, blurting out its clumsy glory as he crosses the scuffed threshold. By the time he reaches the dim hallway leading to the Krenzer's living room, Kevin has the blinding flashbulbs firing at the confident model once again. He speaks rapidly, breathlessly, as if his acceptance here depends upon whatever success he had with Miss November. He tells Lena about the model's big smile and how she turned it on him, then right, left and back again as she steered him across the floor. He talks about how her blond hair was stiff and wiry when it brushed his cheek and how the young woman insisted that her name really was Bonnie Love. By the time Lena offers him a seat on the familiar couch Miss November is bending down to kiss her own photo again, leaving a pink lipstick-print from signature to glossy navel on the promotional centerfold that is Kevin's souvenir.

"Yeah, she did. I think maybe she's an extrovert."

Lena nods slowly, smiling, green eyes wide. For Kevin, the features of her face are a map of the past: high, pointed cheekbones, hollow cheeks, flat nose and smooth skin of tiny newspaper dots that comprise the cage from which he feels he was sprung, half-formed and unprepared. Her thick hair is showing gray now, sparsely, but gray. She is sixteen years older than Kevin. She is wearing her hair differently, a unisex style, long and even in back and short over her ears and shiny forehead. Kevin tries not to stare. He remembers the styleless way she wore her hair for years, how it was left to grow down to the small of her back, hiding her ears and hanging in her face so she could blow puffs of exasperation up at it,

rolling her eyes. He liked it better that way, and realizing this surprises him. In ten years, never did it occur to him that he might either like or dislike anything about Lena's body.

"I want to see it," she says.

"You want to see the centerfold?"

"I want to see the lipstick on it."

There were a few times while he was away—once, at an English port, watching nuclear warheads being lifted from a naval freighter—that Kevin experienced emotions unconnected to the Krenzlers and their home

in the small college town of his youth. Staring at the huge crates of warheads, his fear was so sudden and powerful that it made him wish he was still capable of earnest prayer, then made him question that he wasn't. It was genuine and open, leaving him ashamed of the narrow, self-absorbed obsession which had driven him away from home and into the Air Force at eighteen. His fear made him impatient with his desperation and incompleteness, and it had made him resolve never to set foot in the Krenzlers' home again.

"Did you take her out after, to dinner?"

"No."

Most of his strong feelings while he was away, however, had concerned Lena. Nothing confused his emotions as much as his memories of their strange past together, not even word of his parents' divorce during his second year in the service. The images came to him out of order, in fragments that began the summer of his twelfth birthday. There was the taste of cigarettes in a kiss. There was the curtain of Lena's dark hair spread over the floor of the toolshed behind the house. There was the cool excitement of nakedness in the upstairs bedroom while her husband was teaching at the college. There was her husband George's wide hand, stuffed into the handle of his briefcase. There was the sound of children chirping at play beneath the bedroom window, and the stories Lena told him. Once, she told Kevin the story that she had become pregnant and the child was almost certainly his. She said this was big trouble, because the bills already

had them running and George always said there was no way they could afford a third child. George was very careful about birth control and sometimes talked about how maybe Lena should have an operation. Days later, there was Lena, puffing cigarettes in a sunspot on the living room rug and telling Kevin that George had not said a word about her being pregnant, but that he had shouted vicious things at her with his body that night, loved her hard like a demon until she miscarried. But was this the truth? It took a hundred outlandish fantasies of murdering the lanky professor, years and thousands of miles before Kevin allowed himself to question Lena's truths. There was the indisputable truth, two years later, of the puffed blackness at the side of Lena's eye and her cut lip, but that was a different kind. There was that big hand lifting Kevin by the waist of his jeans, carrying him outside and dropping him gently in the snow. There were no gunshots, no police, only a horribly calm voice telling him to find another place to play,

BACK

to go home and never return.

And there he was returning, cautiously at first, for another two years. There he was, leaning against the telephone pole across the street and smoking her cigarettes on the night of his senior ball. There were Lena's wide hips shifting beneath the sheet as she whispered that she wanted her lover to have her like a virgin. There were things he could never tell her, like the fact that he had not masterbated before he was twelve, before their first time together, so that when he came he was secretly ashamed to think he was urinating inside her. He could never tell her that from the beginning there was a voice speaking to him inside his head, an angry voice that he ignored for a long time. The voice kept getting louder, telling him again and again that Lena must have been a very sick woman.

"No, I didn't take Bonnie Love out or anything. It was all just a publicity thing. Besides, I have to tell you, Lena, the truth is I'm not too smooth with the

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ladies," Kevin confesses with a nervous laugh.

Lena does not speak. She sits tensely still, upright, staring at him helplessly with hurt and sympathy that at first make Kevin wish she would touch him, but after a minute make him feel awkward.

"Not to say that I wouldn't have taken her out if that was what she wanted. I can't think what we would have had to talk about; it's not every day you meet a young lady with her assets," he jokes.

Kevin had said two things to Miss Bonnie Love November: "I can't dance" and "thank you," the former of which he repeated throughout their ten minutes together. She led, calling him her sweetie and saying not to worry. Her lipstick was so bright and thick that it made her lips look like waxed steel. She wore yellow plastic shell earrings and sweet, strong perfume and rubbed herself hard against him to whistles and howls. It bothered Kevin that he could not think of more to say to the model, that he could not joke easily or move smoothly even in such a ludicrous situation. He wanted to let her know that he was in on the laugh.

Somehow he had missed out on the art of flirting. He had not dated during high school or learned the rituals of words and gestures that bring strangers together. Kevin explains to Lena that while he was in bars, whether overseas or on leave at home, the polished, hairsprayed young women and confident men seemed to him to be at some distant center. Their spontaneous language and graceful motion was so unknown to him that he could not believe in his own simple words. Their performances were so beautifully choreographed that he did not know how or where to step in; he felt he was at the edge of a beach, spying on a carnival on the sand with his toes hanging over the edge of the boardwalk.

Kevin tells Lena how he was flattered that Bonnie Love singled him out from the drunken men, took his hand and tugged him away from the bar. The model spoke with her eyes and he became foolishly convinced that there was some special connection between her life and his. He was waiting for the language to come to him, to pour into his imagination suddenly and freely. Then the dance was over and Bonnie Love was kissing her folded image and offering it to Kevin, who stood gaping

stupidly, paralyzed in the fire of flashbulbs.

He does not tell Lena that upon examining the caption he was amazed to discover that Bonnie Love was roughly his own age, registering in at a vulnerable twenty-two years and three months.

"Hey, Lena, you got pretty quiet," Kevin says uncomfortably. "I hope you're not too mad at my coming back."

"No, no," she whispers.

"I can't really say why I did, why I'm here," he fumbles. "It's not that I'm looking for any trouble."

"I know. I know it, Kevin. It's all right."

"I mean, I'm not trying to screw things up, but..."

"No, no, no," she whispers gently, staring at him with pained amazement.

"But there wasn't any other place I could think to go to."

Lena stands. When she steps toward him, Kevin thinks she will reach for him, imagines her cool hands on his cheeks, but after a pause she brushes past his knees. He watches her torn sneakers, small steps across the rug, and when she turns to lean her back against the

sor's study.

"George, Kevin is here. Kevin Taube, out of the service. Come down and say hello."

All through basic training, so embedded in his imagination was the notion of George's body as immovable, that Kevin is unprepared for the professor's fluid reality. Kevin stands as he sees George on the staircase. What he had not guessed was that the vulnerability he feels on seeing George does not concern threats or physical harm, but the twisted violence of misunderstanding. How can he explain that he holds no fantasy of staying in this choked town, much less the Krenzer's home, when he cannot explain why he is back at all? Maybe he should just stumble through it. Kevin makes a desperate fumble for the words to show this man who has glanced at Lena and is lurching toward him, that...

George puts forward one of his hands, furry gray across the back. "Welcome home, soldier," he says.

"Kevin, tell George about the centerfold girl you danced with," Lena says, walking toward them. "He'll get a kick out of that."

"Centerfold girl? Yes, tell me. But

"Her lipstick was so bright and thick that it made her lips look like waxed steel."

far wall he sees that she is crying. Kevin wants to tell her a joke, something irresistible, but cannot think of one. At first he wants to run to her, feel her chest heave against him, but then he does not want anything. They stare at each other and Lena risks an unhappy grin, embarrassed over her blotchy skin and tears. He latches on to this, beams back at her goofily. She shakes her head, wipes her eyes and nose on her knuckles and pushes her fingers into the pockets of her jeans. Although he is staring into her eyes, Kevin also sees her growing smile and her whole slumped body.

"George!" she shouts, turning toward the stairs.

A grumble descends from the profes-

first let's all sit down," George suggests.

The three of them step toward the couch, hesitantly and then knocking into each other, so that, after some laughter, Kevin is resting between the Krenzlers. He prepares to repeat the story, the story about his prowess with the opposite sex that is supposed to keep them all laughing and at ease.

"The first thing you have to understand," he begins, "is that I can't dance."

By
Scott Cole



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flunk on account of my stubbornness." She moved her chair a bit closer to him. She really didn't care if he left, she told herself, but it was kind of nice to have someone around who wasn't med-certified.

Tim considered what she'd said. Yeah, he needed the credit, but Jesus, if it meant putting up with this all afternoon, he didn't know if it was worth it.

Mrs. Dennelman considered Tim's silence. "Look, kid," her voice hardened again. "I didn't ask for no visitors. I'm old and I'm sick and you come barging in here expecting some sweet old grandmother. Well, I ain't sweet and I ain't no grandmother."

Tim turned away from the door to face her again, not wanting his back to take the brunt of her accusations any longer. "Look, lady. I didn't ask for this either. It got assigned to me and they want me here. You think I call sitting with some old lady on a Saturday afternoon who hates everything and everybody a good time? I didn't come here expecting much, but I sure as hell didn't expect this. I thought maybe you'd be sick of being alone all the time."

They both stayed quiet a moment,

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and I felt really sorry for her. It would be awful to grow up like that, without a mother. I don't think that I could deal with it. I remember one day there was a thing where you bring your mother to school with you to eat lunch and stuff. I heard that the girl with no mother cried because she had to sit at a table with the teacher, and it just wasn't the same. I don't remember being there myself; I guess I was sick that day.

This road seems to go on forever. Sometimes I find myself walking right in the middle of it without realizing. I weave in and out of the dotted lines, and it seems like I step on all of the cracks even if I don't try to. This is one of those straight, flat roads that don't really go anywhere.

I just start thinking that I haven't seen any cars in over an hour when I see a speed limit sign in front of me suddenly grow brighter. I turn and see a pair of headlights behind me. My first impulse is to hide, but then I hear the engine and realize that it's a lot quieter than that pickup had been. I decided quite a while ago that if another car came, I wouldn't try to hitch a ride, and I don't.

Tim's words ringing in the cramped room. Mrs. Dennelman looked away from Tim and rolled herself over to her bureau. She reached up and felt the top of it, searching the contents littering its surface.

"Want a hand?"

She said nothing. Tim walked over to where she was fumbling. He saw her hands up close for the first time. They were knarled and worn, but they had a certain strength. He gave those hands the pictures from the dresser.

"The box, too."

Her possessions lying safely in her lap, she rolled herself over to the bed again. Tim followed and sat where he had been sitting before.

"This is my family," she said, spreading out the well-worn pictures on the bedspread before him. "This is my mother," she introduced first, handling the ancient pictures carefully. "And this," she said, placing a second photo next to her mother, "this is my father. He was a strong man."

Tim looked at the two pictures and tried to imagine them alive. He was sorry he couldn't.

"This was me as a young girl," Mrs. Dennelman said, placing a picture of a

beautiful young woman down beneath her parents' pictures. "I was an only child. Well, actually I had an older sister before I was born, but she died when she was two." She wished she had a picture of her. She looked softly at the three pictures and remembered so well those people and those times. She smiled.

"Who's that?" Tim asked, pointing out a picture of a handsome young man. "Your husband?"

"My son."

Tim couldn't imagine Mrs. Dennelman being somebody's mother.

"His name was David," Mrs. Dennelman said and placed the final picture beneath her own.

"How old was he there?"

"Seventeen." There was silence for a few moments. Tim asked, "What's in the box?"

"Mrs. Dennelman?" the same nurse popped her head in the room.

"Jesus, don't you knock?" she yelled, gathering her things.

"Time to change your dressing," she sang.

"That's okay," Mrs. Dennelman said,

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One bad experience was enough for tonight. As the car gets closer, though, it passes me, slows down and stops just up the road. The four-way flashers go on and somebody steps out of the driver's side.

I don't get scared very often. Most things that scare other people just seem funny to me; I guess it's just the way I was brought up. The only time I can remember ever being scared was on a Halloween a long time ago. A friend of mine dared me to go into the old O'Neill place, and I was stupid enough to do it. That place was really huge, and it was so scary that I was probably the only person to go into it for over fifty years. The house had three stories, but I got so scared that I could only make it halfway up to the second floor. Everything was really dingy in there. There was still some furniture left, old junky stuff that nobody even wanted to steal. There were paintings on the walls, too. There was one of George Washington and little ones all around it of people I'd never seen. Over the fireplace there was this big picture of some tall skinny guy sitting in a chair who looked like a

judge. He looked like he was mad at something and his eyes seemed like they were on me the whole time. There was a lot of dust and crud on the picture but I wiped off the name plate and it said Ezra. That guy looked like an Ezra.

That place gave me a severe case of the creeps; I was out of there real quick. I don't know why, but there was just something too big about the place. I don't think I'll ever go into another house that belongs to an O'Neill again, because they might be related and I don't ever want to see anybody who even remotely resembles that Ezra guy again.

Anyway, I don't get scared very often, but right now I'm a little scared about who might be getting out of that car. There's not really anyplace to hide out here, and I'm kind of hungry so I don't feel strong enough to fight off some psycho.

"Want a lift?" It's a woman's voice. I am relieved. "Sure!" She looks pretty harmless.

The car is as big as a battleship. It

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again.

Mrs. Dennelman laughed and Tim rose from the bed and stood next to her, putting the things back where they belonged.

"What's this about your dressing?"

"Oh, it's easy," she said, wheeling herself into the bathroom. Tim heard some noise and the water running. A couple of minutes passed and she returned with some bandages, washcloths and a small pan of water. She handed the things to Tim. "Here."

"Oh, no," Tim said, almost dropping the materials on the floor.

"How do you expect to become a doctor if the easy stuff makes you nervous?"

"I said I wasn't sure yet about being a doctor."

Mrs. Dennelman began removing her bandages from her knee. Tim watched with a mixture of revulsion and fascination. She looked at Tim watching her. "My son wanted to be a doctor."

"Why didn't her?"

"He was, actually, for a while. A medic. In the war. He was killed." putting everything in her lap and wheeling over to the dresser. "Tim here's going to do it for me."

"Huh?" he said, looking up.

"Oh, I don't know—"

"He's studying to be a doctor. It's okay. I'll make sure he doesn't cut off the circulation or anything."

"Oh, well, all right," she said warily. But then she brightened again. "It's so nice to see the two of you getting along so well!" and her head disappeared

Tim started. She was done taking off the bandage.

"I like to think of it as my only fault," she said, motioning at her uncovered half-leg.

Tim swallowed hard. "You want me to—"

"Sure."

Tim turned toward the door. "Uh, I think maybe I should get a doctor or something."

"Nonsense, Tim. You can do this. It's easy."

"Easy for you, maybe."

"It's not easy for me! That's why I need your help."

Tim was standing near the door. His decision about being a doctor had just been made for him.

"Tim, I wouldn't have asked otherwise."

Tim considered this and realized it must have taken a lot for her to admit a weakness. He went back to Mrs.

Dennelman, reaching for the washcloth. "I don't believe I'm actually going to do this."

"Think of it as a learning experience."

Tim walked out of the bathroom. He'd dumped the dirtied water and threw out the old bandages.

"Gonna live?"

"I'll make it," Tim laughed, sitting back on the bed.

Mrs. Dennelman inspected her new dressing. "Not bad. You may make a decent doctor after all." Tim smiled. They sat quietly for a moment.

"What happened to it?" he finally asked.

"What happened to what?"

"Your leg. What happened to your leg?"

"I was trying to lose weight and dieting got me nowhere."

Tim laughed. "I'm serious!"

"Well, actually I have—" she looked around the room and back at Tim and whispered, "cancer."

"Really?"

"Yes. People around here whisper that word as if it makes it better or something. They tried to operate, but it had spread too far."

"Mrs. Dennelman?" the nurse appeared again out of nowhere. Neither of the two of them answered her. "Mrs. Dennelman, time for lunch!"

"I'm old, not deaf."

The nurse blinked happily at Tim. "Visiting hours are over. Time for lunch. Oh! The dressing looks just wonderful. Ready, Mrs. Dennelman?"

Tim stood up, getting in the nurse's way. "I'll take her. If it's okay."

The nurse stopped and looked down at Mrs. Dennelman. "If Tim here wants to see me dribble on myself, it's okay with me."

Tim wheeled her out into the sunshine. She closed her eyes. The warm air and sunshine felt good against her face and she tipped her head back to get the most of it. She couldn't remember the last time she had been outside.

"What's in the bag, kid?"

"The good stuff," Tim said, pulling out hamburgers and french fries. He sat down on the ground and handed Mrs. Dennelman her hamburger.

"This stuff'll kill you."

"I know."

"God, this is good."

Tim agreed, his mouth full. "Want my shake? Chocolate."

"Hand it over." Tim gave her his

shake dutifully.

They sat in the sun like that for a while, enjoying its warmth.

"What happened to your husband?"

Tim asked after a while.

"You ask a lot of personal questions, you know that? What makes you think its any of your goddamn business?"

"You don't have to answer."

Mrs. Dennelman finished the milkshake with a loud slurping noise. "What makes you think I had a husband, anyway?"

"Well, you had a son. And your name. Mrs."

"Oh. The name I'll explain. You see, I lost my leg about two months ago. When I first came to this place, they have you fill out all kinds of forms. The hospital people did 'em for me. I lied."

"Your name isn't Dennelman?"

"Yeah, it's Dennelman, but Miss. I never got married."

"But your son—"

"Tim, I'm amazed. You don't have to be married to get pregnant." Mrs. Dennelman started laughing. "You're blushing! I can't believe it."

"But why lie about your being married?"

"You kidding? All these widowers around? I'd have to go on dates with them for shuffleboard..." Mrs. Dennelman's voice trailed off. "Come on, let's go. I want to show you something."

"... And this," she said, "was David's."

They had returned to the room. It seemed even smaller and darker since they had been outside. Mrs. Dennelman had instructed Tim to get the small box down from the dresser for her. She opened the box and held up a small medal honoring David for his service as a medic in the war. Tim held the medal, tried to imagine earning something like it, tried to imagine what it was like to be David, so young and in the war and dying for one's country. He couldn't.

He handed the medal back to the old woman. She held it in her worn hands and closed her eyes. Tim imagined she must be remembering a long time past.

He put a hand on her shoulder and was surprised at the strength he felt. "You know, I could come up and visit with you another time."

She opened her eyes and replaced David's memory, closing the box again. She laughed and it ended in a harsh cough. "You may find an empty room."

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rides so smooth that I'm starting to feel seasick, even. Nice, though. From what I can see by the glow of the dashboard lights, the lady is about fifty, and pretty, but she's one of those who still wear polyester clothes and turquoise jewelry and thinks everybody else does, too.

After a while she asks me where I'm going and I tell her.

"Oh," she says. "That's just where I'm headed. You can keep me company. You know, I've never picked up a hitchhiker before. But you looked so cold, and this is no place for a girl to be travelling alone."

"I wasn't hitchhiking," I say, but she doesn't hear me. "Do you live there—Mamarose, I mean? I don't remember ever seeing you there."

"No, I'm just visiting my daughter. She just had my first grandchild! She can't be much older than you are—maybe you know her... Judy Mannon?" I shake my head. "No, I don't."

"So what do you do there?" she asks.

"Nothing right now. I've been away awhile. Before I left I was a secretary for an insurance company."

"That's a nice job."

"It was okay. I'm not sure if I can get

it back now—I've been gone quite a long time." She acts like she wants to ask me why but it would sound too nosey. We don't talk for a few miles. Finally she says, "It's unusual to get so much rain out here for this time of year. It really came down hard where I was. Did you see any? You didn't get caught up in it, did you?"

"No."

"Well, that's good," she says slowly, like she is looking for something else to say. "We'll be there in a little while. What part of town do you want to get off at?"

"Parma Road," I say.

"Hmmm... can't say as I know where that is. Is that in town?"

"No, it's a little ways out. I'll tell you how to get there."

"Is that where you live?" she asks.

"It's where my mother lives. I don't really live anywhere right now." I don't feel like talking so I start giving her real short answers to her questions and pretty soon she shuts up.

In about half an hour we're almost there and I give her directions to the place I want to go. It's quite a ways from town, and there aren't many houses around. The roads are all dirt and big

rocks thunk the bottom of the car.

"Are you sure this is the right way?" she asks, and I can tell she doesn't like driving her car on these roads. "Did I take a wrong turn?"

I shake my head. Pretty soon we come to a sign that is old and bent and so dirty that you can't read it any more. "There," I say. "Turn left."

She does, and we go for a couple of miles before I see the place up on the left, and I show her.

"There?" she asks. "I can't leave you there! Why, that's—"

"There," I interrupt, "is where my mother lives."

She looks at me like I'm some kind of nut and pulls over. She doesn't say anything, but I think she's a little afraid of me because she thinks I'm strange. I get out of the car and right away she drives down the road.

It's been quite a while since I've been here, but the old place hasn't changed much. It's really a mess, but that's not surprising since nobody comes to see Mom very often and she can't do everything herself. I walk through the big iron gates which have been covered with

continued on 34



continued from 33

rust for years. One of them is hanging by just a hinge and I bet if somebody touched it, it would fall off.

It's awful dark and there are no lights, but the moon is coming out from behind a cloud. I can see enough to walk. I go through the place, trying not to step on anyone, but sometimes I lose my balance and stumble. I don't know anyone else here, so I go by them quickly to get to Mom. It's been so long that I'm not sure which way to go.

Then I look straight ahead of me and it's there, just like it always looked. I sit down beside Mom and start to talk but she doesn't say anything back. I don't get discouraged, though, because the doctor said that I have come to terms with her gradually and that going back to visit her would only be the first step. I tell her about what the hospital was like and about how I'm starting to understand how she feels; how I'm coming to terms. She doesn't say anything back.

I'm not sure what to do now, so I decide to read to her, because she always likes that. Then I realize that I don't have anything with me to read, and anyway it's too dark. I almost give up the idea but then I think of her

inscription.

"Do you want me to read you your inscription, Mom? You always like that." I trace the letters on the stone with my fingers, but I don't have to because I can remember it anyway.

"Here it is, Mom:

MOTHER

*Lillian now has gone to heaven
Lillian pure and sweet and mild
Childbirth her short life ended
But she lives on in her only child."*

That's me, I guess. The child. I've got the same name as Mom— Lillian. I always thought that was nice. We're a lot alike, Mom and me. I remember everybody always saying that we looked alike. One year we won the mother-daughter lookalike contest at my Girl Scout convention. She really got a kick out of that. It's one of the few times that I remember her being happy. I don't even think she did anything to me afterward. I can't complain, though, because at least I have a mother. I really care for her a lot. We're a lot alike, Mom and me.

She never really did like me, though.



visiting hours

continued from 32

Tim looked at her. "Are you afraid of dying?"

Mrs. Dennelman rolled herself over to the bureau, replaced the box with some effort and went to the window again. "I'm not too thrilled about not living anymore."

A sharp knock came at the door and it opened without waiting for a response. "Mrs. Dennelman?" the nurse chimed and spoke a little louder. "Mrs. Dennelman, time for your medication!" She held up a small white cup, shaking its contents.

Tim heard Mrs. Dennelman sigh, but she didn't turn from the window. Tim wished he could see what she saw. "I'm old."

Not deaf," Tim finished.





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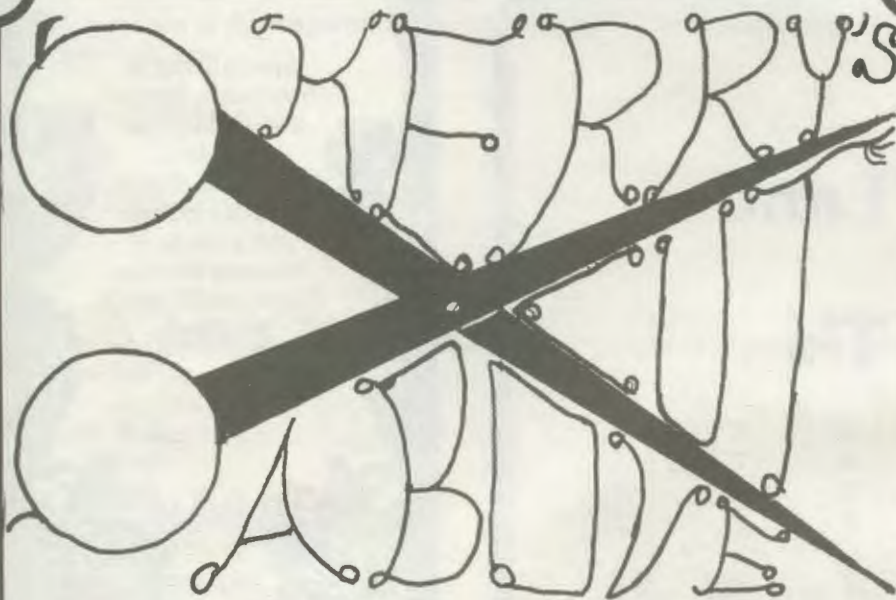
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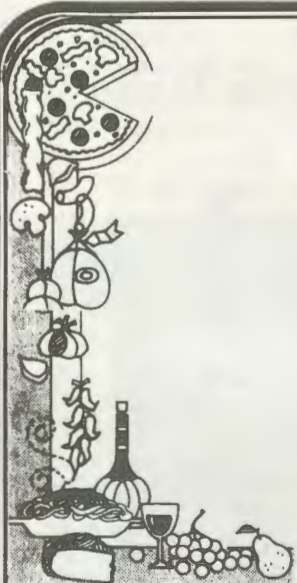
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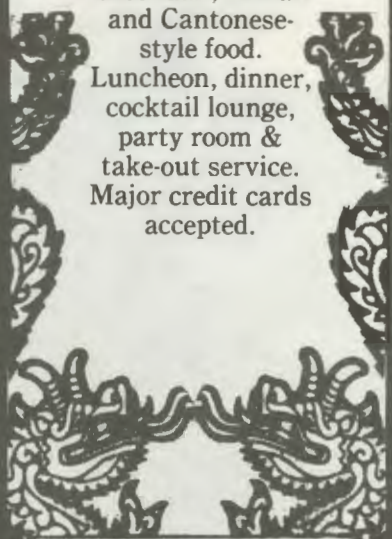
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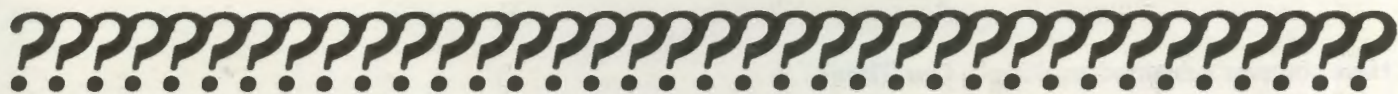
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1. How many of the following **Our Time** issues have you read? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Spring '86 ☐ Fall '86 ☐ Spring '87

2. Of the issues you have read, which did you like best, and why?

3. Which section of the magazine do you most enjoy? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ feature— essays ☐ artwork
☐ feature— reviews ☐ photography
☐ poetry ☐ fiction

4. Please rate the following aspects of **Our Time** on a scale of 1-5 (1 being "poor" and 5 being "excellent"):

quality of: essays	1	2	3	4	5
poetry	1	2	3	4	5
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writing style in general	1	2	3	4	5
quality of: photographs	1	2	3	4	5
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front cover	1	2	3	4	5

5. How did you first learn about **Our Time**? (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Read back issues ☐ Other (please explain) _____
☐ Saw table in Union
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6. Have you ever submitted anything to **Our Time**?

☐ Yes

☐ No

7. If not, why? _____

8. What kind of feature articles would you like to see in the future? _____

9. Is/ are there any section (s) of **Our Time** that you would like to see eliminated or changed? Explain: _____

10. Please feel free to voice any other comments: _____

Interested in contributing to the Fall '87 issue? Contributions must be typed and, if they consist of more than one page, stapled. Submit manuscript copies ONLY; literary material will not be returned. Original artwork or photography, preferably black & white, is acceptable but is subject to reduction or enlargement. The following mediums are suggested: ink drawings, charcoal, pastel, acrylic or oils. Do not submit photography or artwork which exceeds 7 1/2 x 10 inches. All contributions are subject to alterations at the editor's discretion. Mail all submissions, correspondence and the above questionnaire to:

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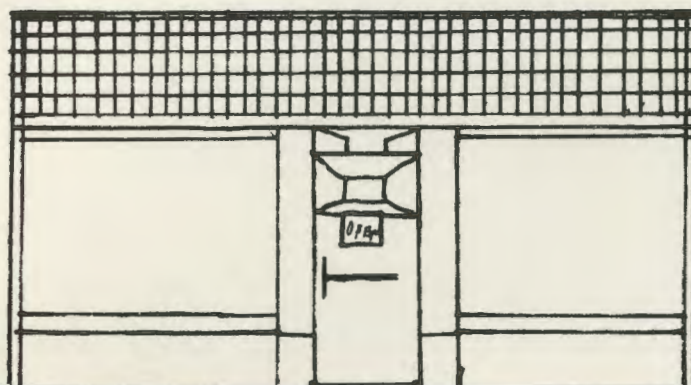
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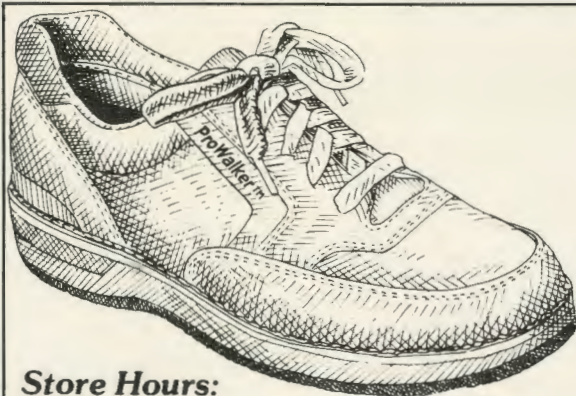
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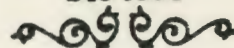
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