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THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

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EDITORIAL

The common reason for an editorial in a "Literary" magazine is to either excuse or pray for what is to come in the pages to follow. I intend to do neither as I feel neither the necessity nor the inclination to worry about such topics. Rather, I would like to excuse or pray for the writers at Western and the creators in London. Is this unfair to the select few who do contribute something valuable to the Literary environment? No.

The triteness of the Canadian inferiority complex is manifested no more tritely than in London. The hypocrisy of criticizing prescribed writers and proceeding to produce assembly line literature in the contemporary tradition of rebellion is, perhaps, understandable but not particularly valuable. This surely cannot stem from a lack of interesting and enlightening experiences. After all, Western is the swinging University and all sorts of people are running hither and about taking psychedelic drugs and getting stoned and practicing free love and killing themselves. Surely there must be some thought provoking experiences in such a magnificent charade. London is the capital of millionaires and vice. Now, there is something thought provoking. So why not gain by the experience rather than relating the facts. A lot of Western poetry bears a great resemblance to a juvenile court agenda or a seed catalogue. Roget's thesaurus appears to be biggest seller in London from what one can see in this style of literature.

Now that "pop" rebellion has become a cliché one might imagine that boredom with such a wasteful status quo would set in. Not so. Not yet? We are developing a breed of stogey old reactionaries in the quasi-romantic-cynical tradition of the last ten years. "Don't blow your cool." is the catch phrase.

Blow your cool. That bloody cool is producing some of the most sterile art that has ever existed. Why is there such an ambition to attain mastery of the single entendre? So what if you call me a condescending bastard or an ignorant young upstart. Why not prove me wrong instead? That, it would seem to me, is a far more reasonable enterprise. It has been said, people, and it is a very poor reflection on the literary situation that it has to come to me to say it.

Is Folio exempt from such criticism? No.

THE EDITOR.

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Photos: Evan Browne, Doug Thomas, Ralph Willsey, Cathy Wismer

Cover: D. R. Brown

ЛІСТІ ДІТЯЧИ



Canadian Winter

It comes on hard, impulsive
Like a punk.
It strips the dress off a summer street
And leaves its beauty soured
Like a woman raped.

Look at winter through a glass
And see
The gem-set whiteness,
The points of icicles,
The obese horizon of grey clouds.

Step into winter
With a brown fringe on a wet road
And slush ankle-deep
And always grit teeth
In a solid block of cold.

It grips the ledge of March
Until some righteousness
Cuts off its fingers.

S. Simpson

CITRUS FLAKED SUNSHINE

He slid to a halt behind the boulder. The breaths belching out were returned by stabs of icy arctic air. He had a resting space, a lapse in the chase. Now to examine what was left. First of all he was alone now; the other three were dead or shortly would be; his skis were useless as the right one had splintered on the hidden stump that had caused his fall; oh yes, and he had lost two of his three remaining grenades in that spill. But did he have his automatic pistol, its rifle stock and extension along with four full clips and he might have close to fifty remaining rounds loose.

The Russians approached the crest overlooking his protective rock cautiously, for the snow camouflaged well.

"I am still a Finn." he muttered; "I am still a Finn, I am still alive and, Finland, my love, those are still Russians and before they rape you, I'll get them all! !"

His mouth spilt muffled words into the snow for there was security in speaking to oneself as it seemed to give the frightened brain two people to clutch.

"Those wolves smell me; they know I'm here, my God, why am I talking aloud? . . . I must be close to the end." He massaged his bruised leg.

The first Russian sailed down the slope, his white parka seeming to tack him from left to right.

"I'll wait", he thought; "until the pig is too close to live, and I'll watch his eyes, oh, will this be good, oh will this be joyous!"

The Russian passed close to the boulder skimming the feathers of snow, he did not see the barrel, its steel glinting in the sun, no, all he heard was a short "burrup" and then he felt the lead pegs in his chest — he fell like a soft petal and was gently enveloped by the folds of white.

The other three scattered and started to reconnoitre the ground for an organized kill — they had been taught well!

I must get into those pines, he thought, or I will be pinned. He tried to roll, for if he stood, his feet would surely sink in the stuff and that split second of motionlessness would be his death.

"Burrup" the Russian fired from the left . . . "wamph", he felt the pokers crash into his chest. He was gone.

Blackness, blackness, whirling coal . . . and then he was there . . . there in front of the cold steel door with bronze chains hanging from every rivet. He pulled one, a great clanging followed and with that came a curt bellow:

"Who is there?"

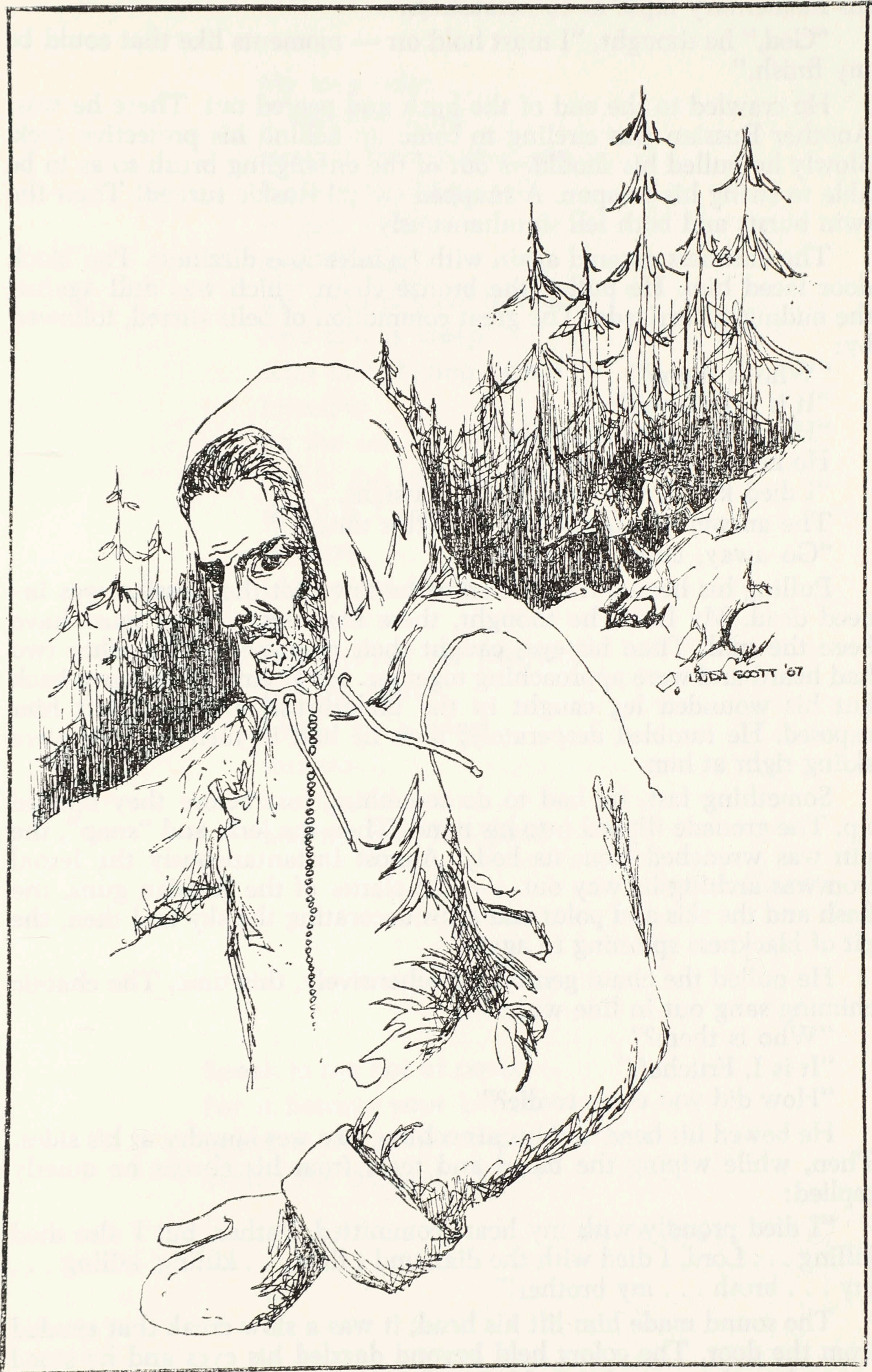
"It is I, Fritchof."

"How did you come to die?"

"I died slaughtering swine!"

A long pause followed and then came the thunder.

"Go away, child, go away."



He rolled into the pines and lay stunned at what must have been his momentary lapse of consciousness.

"God," he thought, "I must hold on — moments like that could be my finish."

He crawled to the end of the bush and peered out. There he was. Another Russian was circling to come up behind his protective rock. Slowly he pulled his shoulders out of the entangling brush so as to be able to swing his weapon. A snapped twig!! Ruskie turned! Then the twin bursts and both fell simultaneously.

The darkness entered again with its infectious dizziness. The black door faced him. He pulled the bronze chain which was dull against the midnight barricade. The great commotion of bells stirred, followed by:

"Who is there?"

"It is I, Fritchof."

"How did you come to die?"

He hesitated and then:

"I died killing the enemy, the Russians."

The answer was quick and crisp this time.

"Go away, child, go away."

Pulling his head out of the snow he saw that the Russian was indeed dead. My Lord, he thought, these blackouts . . . it must have been the spill. Then his eyes caught their movement. The other two had heard and were approaching together. He attempted to move back but his wounded leg caught in the underbrush and thus left him exposed. He fumbled desperately; then he had to turn — they were skiing right at him.

Something fast, he had to do something fast before they opened up. The grenade flipped into his hand. Then the jerk, and "snap", the pin was wrenched from its body. Almost instantaneously the lethal iron was arching its way out. — The clatter of the Russian guns, the flash and the skis and poles and arms decorating the sky and then, the pit of blackness spinning in again.

He pulled the chain gently, apprehensively, this time. The chaotic chiming sang out in line with:

"Who is there?"

"It is I, Fritchof."

"How did you come to die?"

He bowed his head and his arms hung like wet laundry at his sides. Then, while wiping the blood and tears from his cheeks he quietly replied:

"I died proudly with my heart committed, Father, but I also died killing . . . Lord, I died with the diamond's flaw . . . killing, killing . . . my . . . broth . . . my brother!"

The sound made him lift his head; it was a slow creak that exuded from the door. The colors held beyond dazzled his eyes and he stood amazed on the open threshold.

—John Barrington

The Western Wind

My love rides
a western wind
straight from nether sea,
but Hope's white sail
is torn
and thinned,
the sail she gave to me.
And clouds creep
with that chiding breeze
kneeling
on the sun,
but in the haze of jaded seas
the tide I sailed
is done.
I know the wave is still
far out—
day has not yet yawned,
but the craft,
blown by a wind
less stout,
has tipped,
and the gust has gone.

James Kinney

Speak to me not of peace
For it betrays your blindness.
Speak to me rather of peacefulness
Within the general conflict.

Patric Ryan

Today It Is Snowing

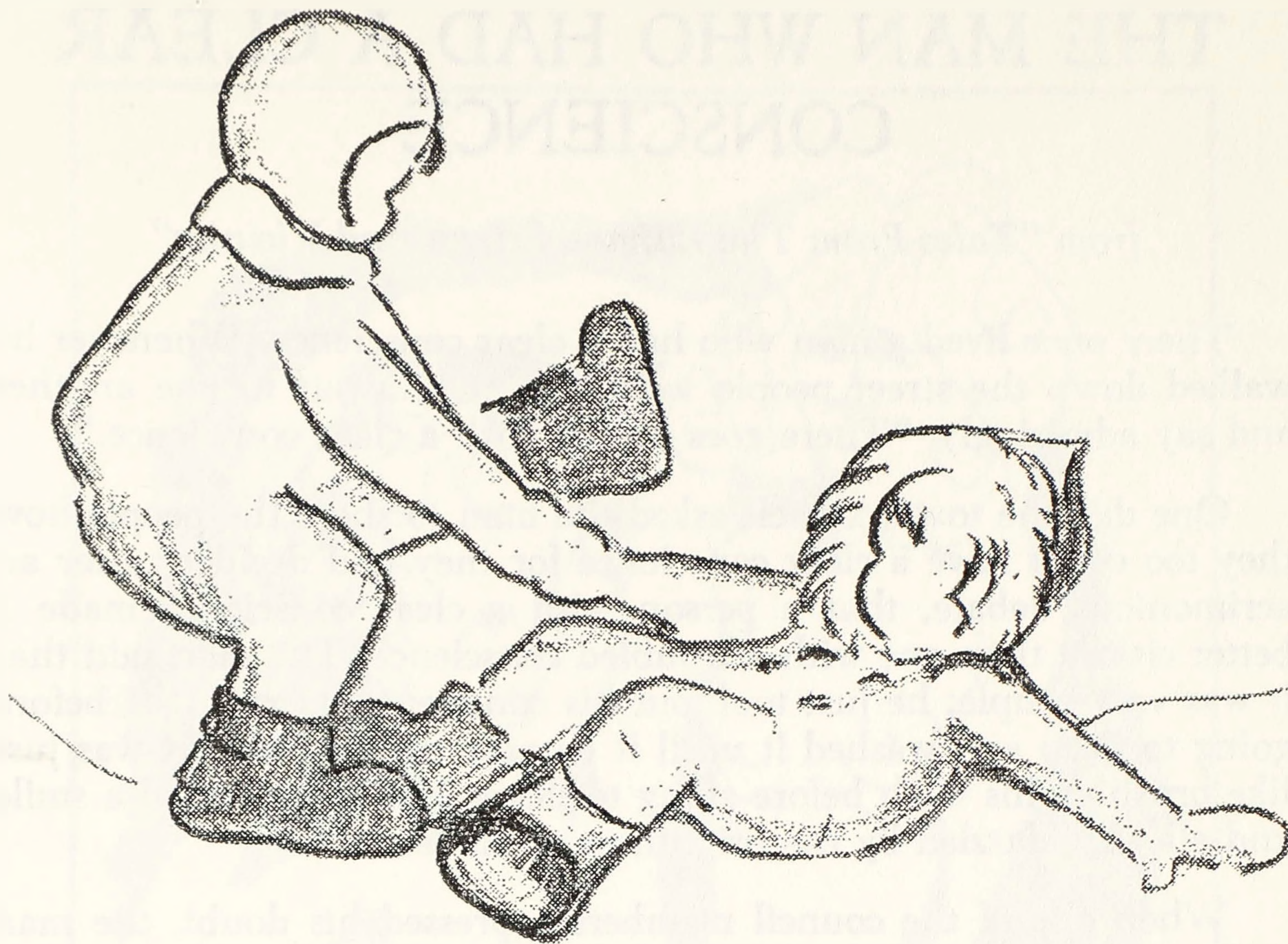
Today it is snowing;
fat, bushy flakes,
slanting in submission to the wind,
come piling onto earth
like bits of fluffed egg white.
The crackling air
that washes down my throat
runs tingles
up and down my back
and makes me lick
the tickling snow that waters on my face.

I went for a walk in Central Park
and watched the mittened children
bomb their snowballed pals with welcome shouts
make tractor treads in the polar piling carpet,
and gambol, sopping, home to patient Mothers.

At school the students
gaze through speckled windows,
grumble at the Christmas sky
that never is traditional,
coddle black, foreshook umbrellas,
and pretend there is no laughter in the snow.

How quickly must I study them
when these november flakes
encrust my lashes
leaving time to see
but two or three
hunchbacking adults shuffle by
with hidden, childish smiles.

Allan Fraser



C. Wismer

HYSTERICIS

and i fell in love one time this time the only time with a
man that i met in bed one time only one time this time in love in
love with the way that he kissed me the way that he held me the
words that he whispered one time one only time i waited to cry
until he was sleeping the tears were gone when he reached for my hand
but his eyes were wet in the corners i saw when he crushed me tight and
close to his heart i felt his heart beating fast and faster inside my hand
and i felt my heart rising and crying and falling across into his hand
and i fell in love with his soft childs kisses his hand trusting mine as
he lay there sleeping dark lashes lying quiet on rosy childs cheeks and his
eyes and his eyes that laughed when i smiled and cried each time i was
silent the very last this last thing that he said was bending down im
sorry only im sorry just once im sorry this only time only one time
and i walked away

Jill Robinson

THE MAN WHO HAD A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

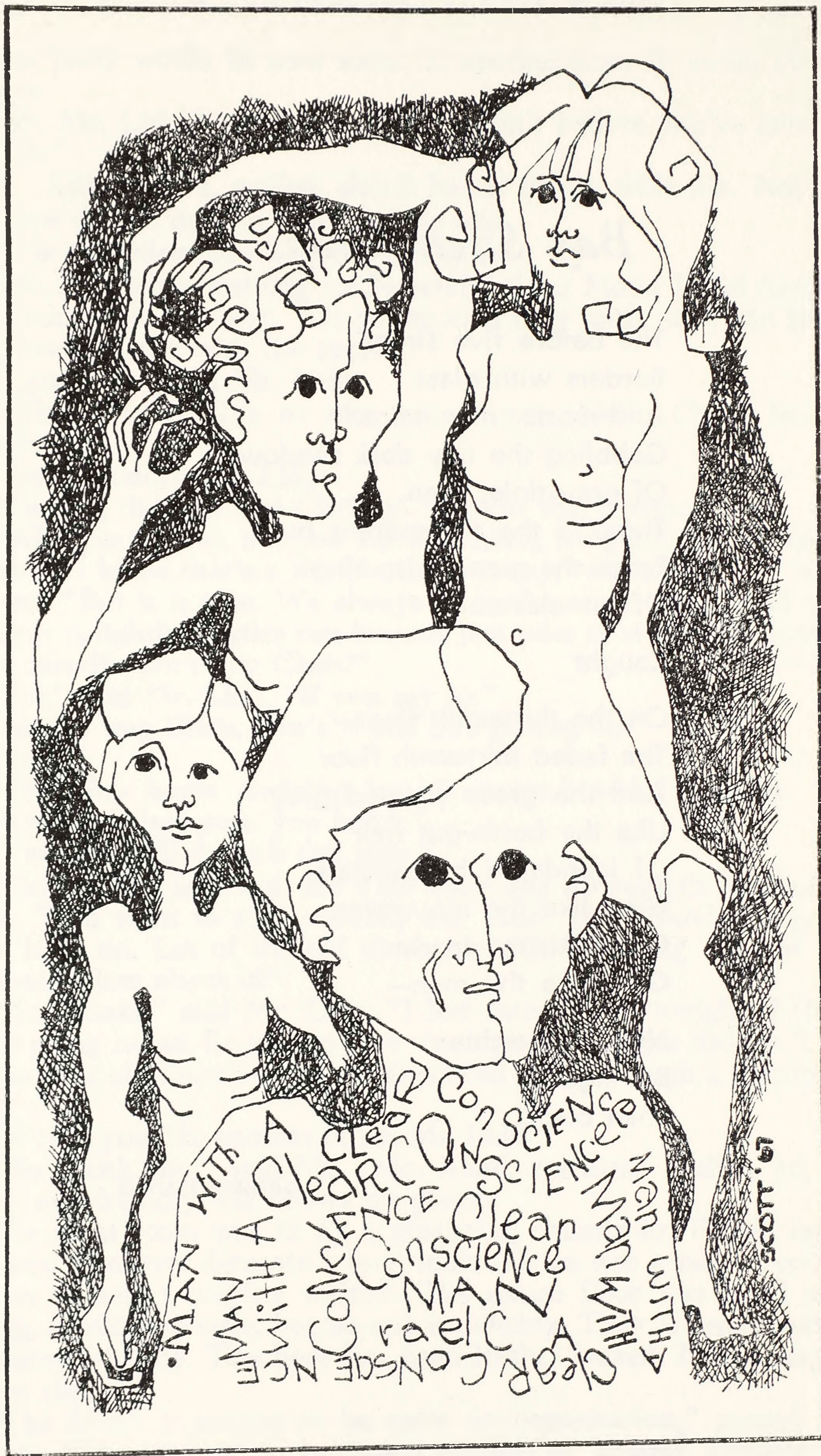
from "Tales From The Lunatic Fringe And Vicinity"

There once lived a man who had a clear conscience. Whenever he walked down the street people would point him out to one another and say admiringly, "There goes a man with a clear conscience."

One day the town council asked the man to show the people how they too could have a clear conscience for they had decided, after an acrimonious debate, that a person with a clear conscience made a better citizen than one with a troubled conscience. The man said that it was very simple; he just took out his conscience every night before going to sleep and washed it until it became crystal clear. It was just like brushing his teeth before going to sleep. The man flashed a smile and all were dazzled by the brightness of his teeth.

When one of the council members expressed his doubt, the man undertook to show all the people of the town how it was done. In the evening, a crowd gathered, and the man stood on a platform where everyone could see him. He coughed and then pulled something out of his right ear. "This," he said, "is my conscience." The people saw that it was so clear that they could see right through it. In fact, if they had not been told that the man had such a clear conscience, they would have sworn that what the man said was his conscience was nothing but thin air. The man urged them all to do the same. "There's nothing to it, just cough and pull your conscience out of your right ears." Now, except for the man, not one of the inhabitants of that town had a clear conscience. Everyone was afraid to take out his conscience in public for fear that his neighbours might see it and mock him for it. So, everybody pretended that he couldn't do it, but all of them intended to take out their consciences and wash them in private. They all went home praising the man for his clear conscience and his ability to wash it. Once in the privacy of their homes, they coughed and tried to pull out their consciences. They used pins, suction discs and conventional and unconventional devices, all to no avail. Many had sore ears, but none succeeded in getting his conscience out. They did not tell each other about their attempts, for each had made it clear to the others last night that he simply could not do it. So, in awe, the townspeople kept pointing out the man to each other whenever he walked down the street, and said. "There goes the man with a clear conscience."

—R. B. Osman



Bay Street Grays

The before five street
Borders with glass
And mortar mountains
Gobbling the tiny dark shadows
Of grey tinier men.
Through the transparent hum
Echos the green crisp ring
Of an elevator

Caught

On the thirteenth floor—
The faded thirteenth floor
And the green painted grey
Like the bottle-got hair
Of laundered bureaucrats;
Grey like the mountains
Grey like the mortar
Grey like the men—

Not any brighter
But lighter
Than black.

Sandra Paivio

OCTOBER LEAVES

The party would be over soon. In another hour it would be safe to leave.

"Ah, Mr. Lido," smiles the host, "I don't believe you've met Mr. Novitch."

Mr. Lido turned, smiled, shook hands firmly with Mr. Novitch.

"How do you do, Mr. Novitch," he said.

"It is a privilege to meet you, Mr. Lido."

"Mr. Novitch is training for Secretary of the Motor Hotel Association," continued the host. "It's young men they want now, you know. Must keep in step with the times."

"I guess so," said Mr. Lido.

"Why Martha! It's so nice to see you. Hello Chris, how is everything?"

"Fine," nodded Mr. Lido.

"Martha, did you and Chris go overseas this summer?"

"Why yes we did, but you know Marian, it's getting to be rather a bore — I know that's a terrible thing to say," she added in a hasty whisper. "But it is true. We always go to the same places, and even the most delightful castles can become just piles of stone. You noticed that yourself didn't you Chris?"

"Yes," said Mr. Lido. "If you say so."

"By the way Chris, how's young Bob getting on?"

"Fine."

"Yes. He's home studying for his exams," added Martha. "He didn't make it last year, you know."

"I'm sure he'll do well this time."

Friendly Mr. Jain with his wide smile and his smooth, evanescent voice: "You want to stick around, Mr. Lido. We're having a poker game later on. Lot of the old die-hards will be sitting in. Just like old times. How about it?"

"No thanks," said Mr. Lido. "I feel rather tired tonight. I think I'll be going home. Be sure to give the boys my regards though."

'Just like old times' — the words echoed dully through a somnolent mind.

"Would you like another drink, Mr. Lido?"

"No thank you," said Mr. Lido. Aloof, mannerly waiter, yet intimate and friendly. He knows his place.

The great room was lit by a glistening chandelier. Punch bowls and hors d'oeuvres decorate a long table. There was a bar, of course, and an orchestra playing waltzes. The dance floor was filled with talking, drinking people, but no one is dancing. They are manoeuvring, being friendly. The floor has been freshly waxed. It was easy to make a slip.

"The MHA is getting to be quite an organization," purred Mr. Novitch. "If I should be fortunate enough to become secretary, it would certainly be a pleasure to work with you, Mr. Lido." (He couldn't call him Chris yet.)

"I'm sure we will get along fine," returned Mr. Lido, at the same time catching his wife's eye: "Martha, I think it is time we were going."

"Oh, go right ahead, dear. Marian and I are having a most interesting discussion about fashions."

"I'll see you at home then," replied Mr. Lido.

He walked from beneath the great stone pillars of the house, down the steps, and towards Jeffory, who waited obediently for him by the car. At least Jeffory and he understood each other — but they weren't really friends in the true meaning of the word. From almost the beginning, in 1935, when he built the first motor hotel in Canada, Jeffory had been with him. They could talk easily. Perhaps that was enough. Perhaps that was what friendship really was.

"Did you have a good time sir?" asked Jeffory as he opened the car door.

"Yes. Very nice." replied Mr. Lido.

It was relaxing in the car, quiet. Mr. Lido listened to the beat of rain on the roof, the whistle of tires along the wet road, the monotonous click of the wipers. He thought bitterly of what a facade life was. He thought of all the things he had learned, but he was not a pompous man because he recognized that his ignorance was great. He remembered how poor he was as a child, how he had worked his way up. He had striven hard for success and was happy with it — for awhile. But it had worn off much as his marriage had. Life was boring: too many obligations left too little time for relaxation and no place for change.

As he got out of the car, he saw, over the splattering rain on the roof, a poorly dressed, middle-aged man walking along the other side of the street. Perhaps that man could tell him many things about life which he had never known. Mr. Lido had a sudden urge to call him over, take him inside, sit down and talk to him over a bottle of brandy. But that kind of thing wasn't done. It would probably be futile, anyway. But the comfortable thought of a warm glass of brandy lingered. He had not had a glass of brandy for a long time, and it was a cold October night, and . . .

Suddenly, impulsively, he turned, ran up the stairs as quickly as he could, and entered the hotel; he ignored the girl who stood waiting to take his coat, ran to his flat, fumbled urgently in his pocket for the keys.

The door opened to darkness.

Mr. Lido, groping, made his way slowly to the fireplace. He searched his vest pocket for a match to light the wood and paper, arranged that night, as it was every night, by some nameless servant.

The paper caught: crackled in the silence of the darkness, casting faint glimmers about the room and around the huge crouching shadow of Mr. Lido. It curled brown, then black, and infected the logs.

Turning aside, he pulled his easy chair up to the growing fire. He lit one of his favourite cigars, savoured it contentedly for a moment. "Perfect," he thought.

The flames reflected their movements on the furniture, the walls, making the room seem almost alive with dancing shadows and rain, driven by strong, steady wind, beat oppressively against the windows.

Mr. Lido walked over to the cabinet. He pulled out the bottle of brandy. Against the changing, leaping flames of the fire, he could see it . . . Empty.

It was a quarter to five Friday morning. A steady fall of rain quickly soaked through Bill's faded clothes he could feel the squish and suck of water between his socks and toes as he walked. He followed for a moment his scuffed, muddy shoes making their way through the blowing slush of black leaves, then raised his eyes to the street, to the neon lights, advertisements, swinging, changing, fading into the distance.

Halfway down the block blinked a large V-shaped sign: "The Star-Lite Motor Hotel". Orange lights were carefully arranged in the shrubbery to make the building appear inviting, luxurious by night. Driveways led down to underground parking on either side. A circular drive enclosed the most meticulous frontal display: a small fountain based by shrubbery and surrounded by trim evergreens. The front building, set apart from the suites, was ingeniously appealing due to its peculiar triangular roof which was coated with bright red shingles descending to overlap just slightly the eaves of the main floor. Behind this attractive front ran the usual run-of-the-mill hotel: indifferent, almost hostile.

A limosine drove up, stopped in front of the entrance. The chauffeur hurried around, opened the back door. As the gentleman emerged he happened to glance across the street towards Bill. He stared at him for a moment, then turned suddenly and ran quickly into the lobby.

Bill watched him disappear into the lights and he suddenly wanted very much to be that man: vigorous, successful, blessed with the better things — instead of what he was — a failure. But it was too late to think about the mistakes of the past. He turned his eyes back to the street and the Motor Hotel soon vanished behind him into the swirling October leaves.

Bill Gordon was fifty-eight years old. For the past fifteen years he had worked for the Alberta Gas Company as a night clerk, a dispatcher for 'emergency' calls to customers' homes. His shift ran from eight-thirty at night to four-thirty in the morning, Monday to Friday. He was a simple man. He didn't understand the quick pace of the world around him. Whenever he was downtown he watched the young people: couples arm-in-arm laughing and talking, little boys and girls with their parents, all floating past him like phantoms living in another world, visible for only a moment beneath the city lights, quickly absorbed into darkness. He wondered occasionally what they talked about, what was important to them. He found contentment in other things — a good book, a game of Russian Billiards, a bit of pubbing. He attended mass faithfully Sunday evenings. The Lord's ways were strange, he knew, but the Lord was with him and He was the source of sufficient strength.

With slow-moving limbs, Bill made his way into "The Moonglow Restaurant".

"Morning."

" . . . "

"The usual, Sir?"

"Yes, please."

The waiter turned to the counter and picked up a waiting tray.

"Here you are, Sir."

"Thank you."

"That fellah doesn't look too well," said the waitress as she watched him go.

"Oh, you wouldn't know him bein' new here. He's the oldest customer we got. Comes in every morning around five. Works for the gas company up the street. Joe's been here for seven years, and he was comin' in even before that." He turned towards the kitchen: "That right Joe?"

Bill crossed the street to his room. He was anxious to get to bed. It was still raining; the wetness made him shiver. He coughed deeply. As he opened the familiar door, he noticed the faint red light of the morning sun break upon the rim of the clouds overhead.

"Well," he smiled to himself, "It'll be a bright day today after all."

In the later morning hours, as the neighbourhood children laughed and played through the sunny leaves, Bill quietly passed away. The landlady was upset when she found him. "He was a good tenant," she told the doctor. "Always paid his rent on time." The Alberta Gas Company extended their sympathy by paying for his death notice; they also inserted an ad in the 'Help Wanted' column.

The funeral was unattended.

—John Riddell

Summerscape

Old woman
Hearing chords
Of some unknown melody

Walk softly
In your sensible shoes
The shaded summer-streets

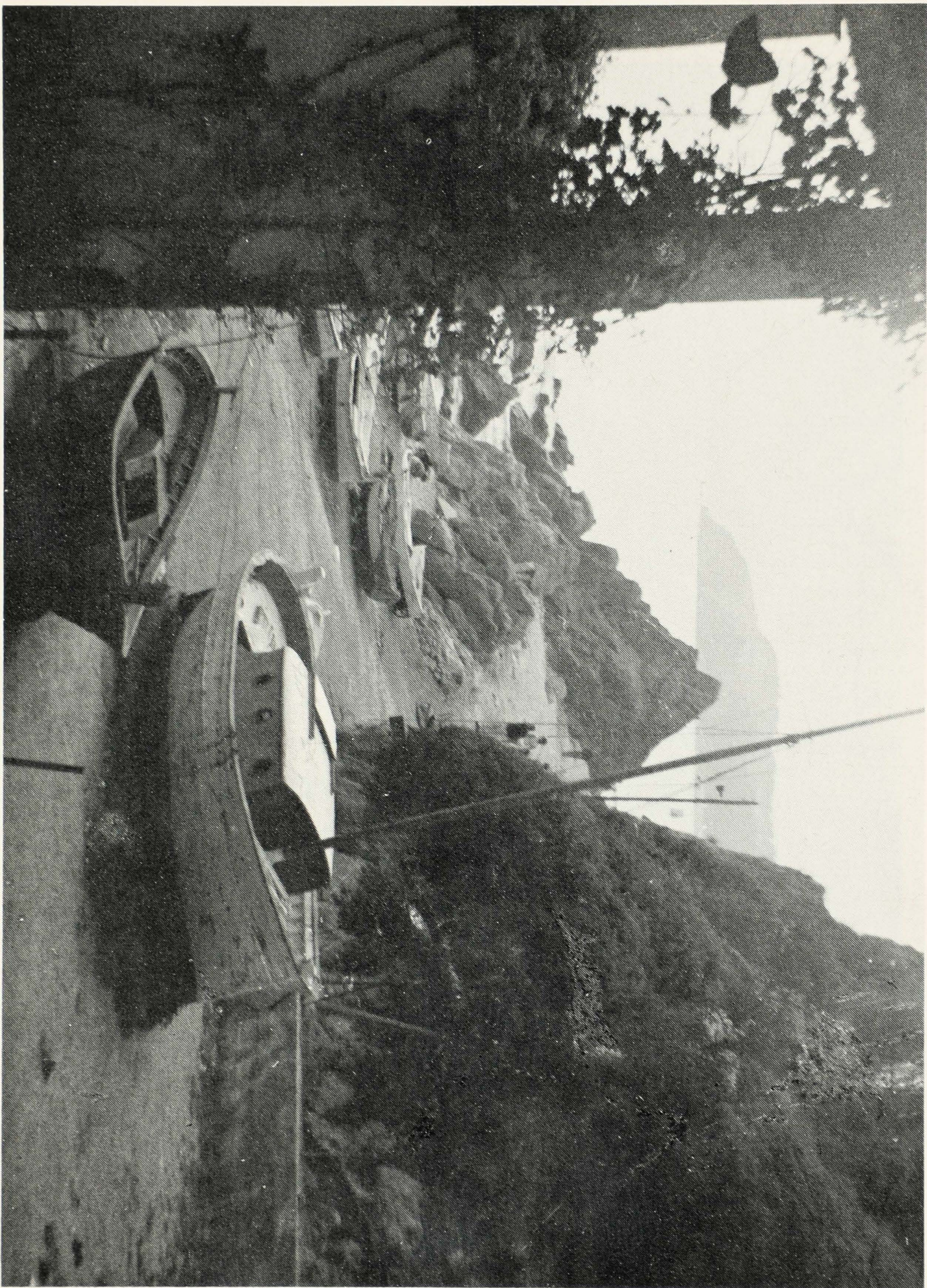
To a home
Where your tenure
Expires as you move

Like a swamped
Rowboat hoping to run aground
To find an end to navigation.

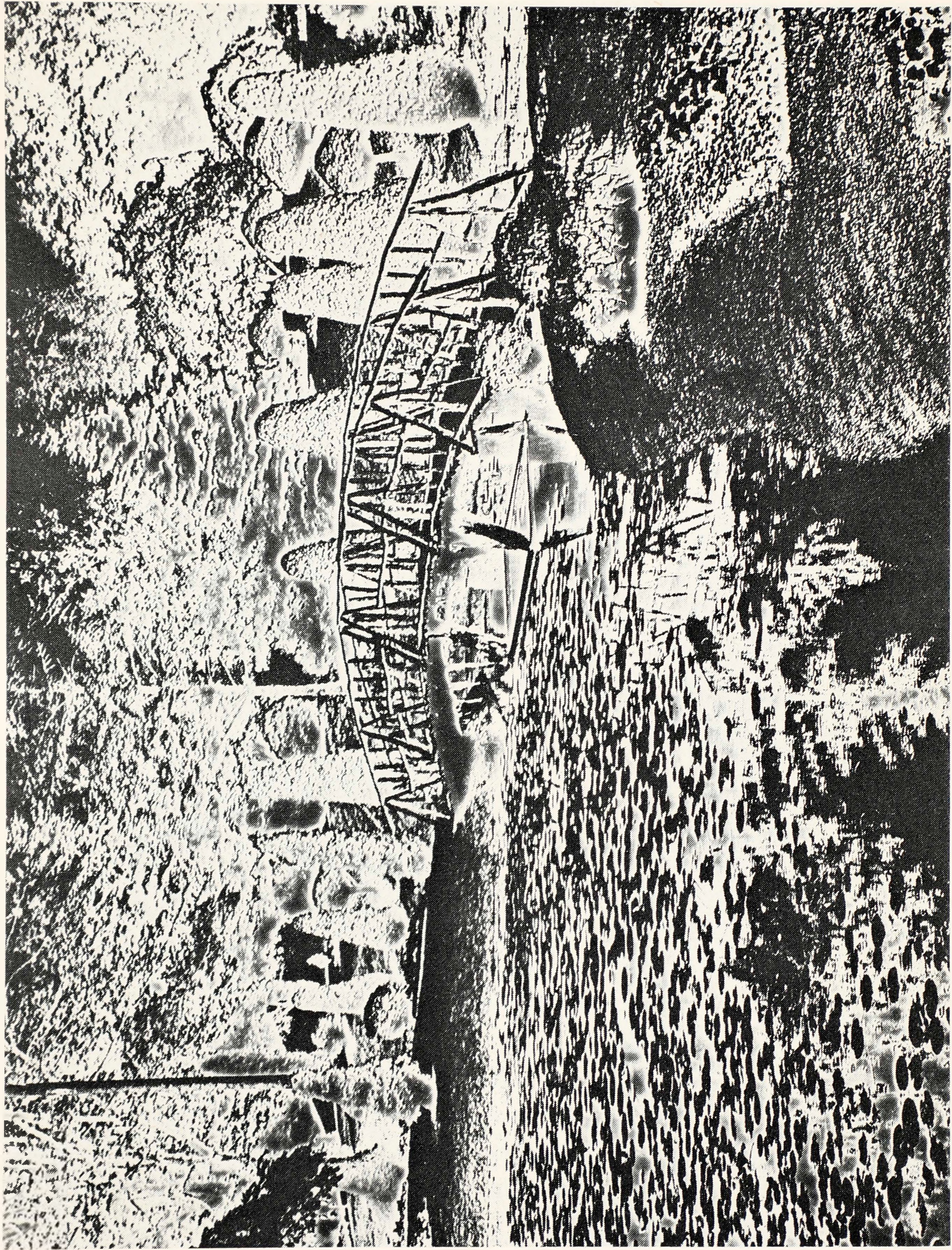
Jim Payne



—Evan Browne



—Kathy Wismer



—Ralph Willsey



—Doug Thomas

Sunday

for H. H. with tangerines

YESTERDAY

Spring in January
summer sun on a shadowless day

THE BUSRIDE

At the back
we sat
and helped a boy
to steer.

It was quiet,
like a horizontal elevator.
Then Spring came
at the downtown floor
and got vertically off.

THE MALL

Money paid for marble floors,
plate-glass windows stuck indoors,
choir smiles inside the stores.

A place for lonely inbetweens
with long hair, short words,
and clothes that mothers clean.

THE GALLERY

On the wall
purported art
hung in warped frames.

Colour-collide
stuck the eye
with painted pins,
vibrating things,
aesthetic pieces of wood.

Some posters for another show
were on the wall outside;
stole one to make the trip worthwhile
and left the art inside.

THE MARKET

Outside leaves of lettuce
were gathered by rag-coat boys
while old ladies rummaged
on paint upon painted stalls
stacked high with
Africa Australia Brazil
and a local backyard.

Left, but not before buying
 one tangerine
 for a nickel
 to drop the peels
 in window grids
 and spit the pips at puddles.

THE PARK

God was there,
in wire-rimmed spectacles
feeding breadcrumbs to pigeons and squirrels.

So were the Sebastopol cannon
where the kids play
and shine the iron with their seats;
 and the tank—
 and the memorial.

Victoria Park is a war park.

TODAY

Sunday came
with people riding frozen puddles
to church.

Ray Sealey



“Victoria Park is a War Park”

TOMORROW I'LL BE GONE
Introduction

Verse

1. To - mor - row I'll be gone, Come the

mor - ning sun and I'll be mo - ving on. You were

al - ways to much wor - ry on my mind, That's why I'm

lea - ving you be - hind, And to - mor - row I'll be gone.

Interlude

Gone to - mor - row, still I

won - der When I'll see you if I'll e - ver come

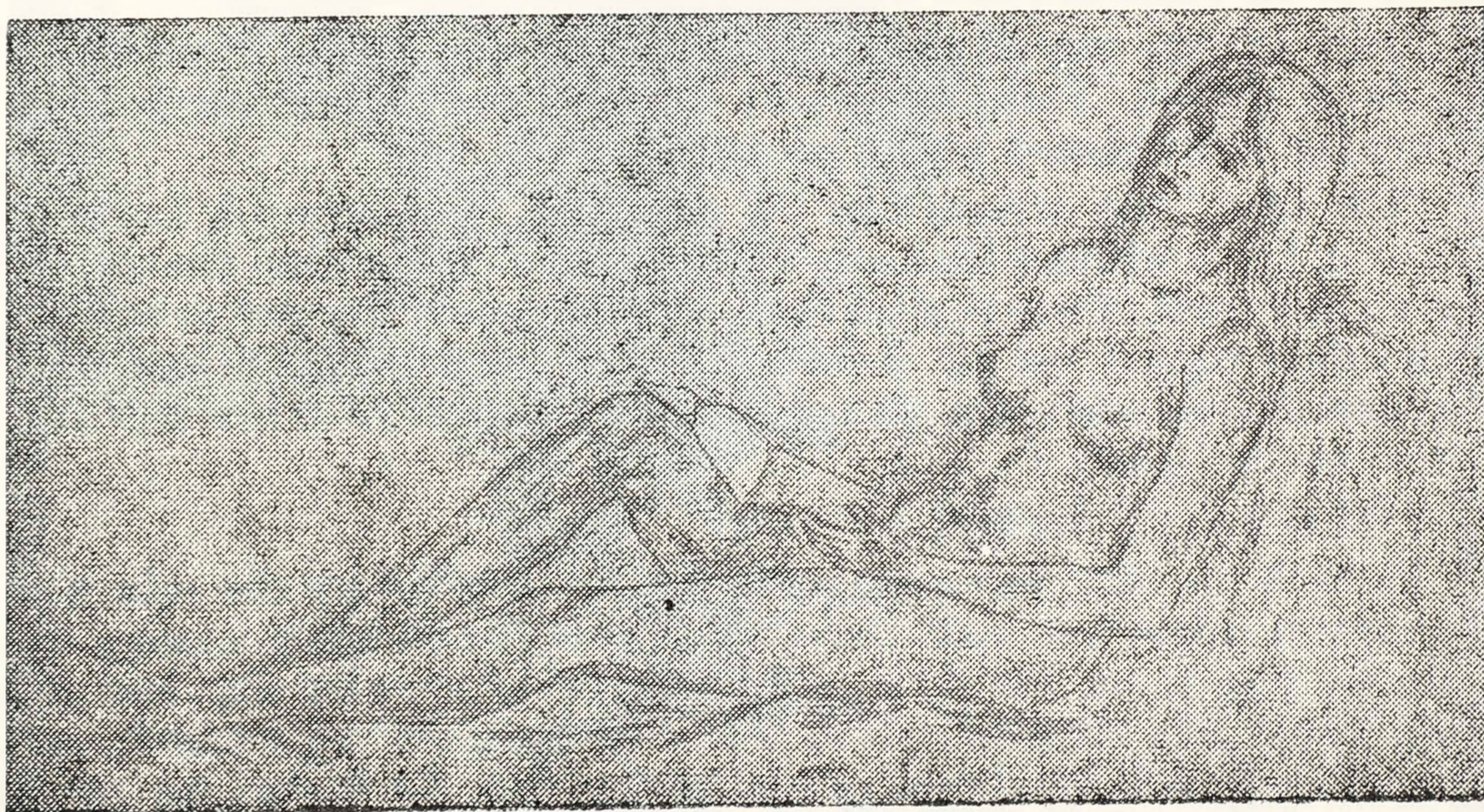
back home.

2. Can't even tell you where I'm bound.
I'll just keep wandering and never settle down,
There's a lot of things that I've still got to see,
So please don't try to follow me,
'Cause tomorrow I'll be gone.

Interlude

3. I'll ride on every singing breeze,
And let them carry me wherever I may please.
Then when I've seen and known and done what I can do,
They'll know and lead me back to you,
But tomorrow I'll be gone.
4. Then I can tell you what I've found,
And try to sing to you the songs that know no sound.
And I'll paint you pictures that the world can't see,
But 'till then all you'll know of me
Is tomorrow I'll be gone.

Music and lyrics by Paul Shakespeare



MAISIE

The shadows cast by the hot afternoon sun, fell black, precise, and diagonally across the road. The 'bus rumbled through them towards the Northern part of the town, and Maisie shuffled on her scorched, upper-deck seat, blowing out the bitter, dry smoke of her cigarette. Two schoolboys wearing crimson caps sat in front of her. Apart from them she was the only passenger. As the 'bus approached Morton Street she gathered together her loaded shopping bags. Her shoes scraped on the dusty metal floor of the 'bus, and lurching she made the awkward descent of the stairs.

Her forehead sweated, and she felt contorted in her black coat as she toiled up the hill. The sun beat down through the heavy air, and the pavement baked through her shoes. Green flies flittered from the privet hedge as she elbowed her way through the rotting wooden gate of her garden. Struggling for her key she heard the cricket commentary droning from the kitchen. She hauled her bags through the cool, rancid smelling hallway puffing slightly. Then, pushing the kitchen door open, she muttered,

"I'm back Father."

But the old man's chair was vacant. The cushions were flattened and the fading, flowered antimaccasar was creased from where his back had been. Maisie stared for a moment.

"Up on the allotment I suppose," she mumbled to herself. There was a sudden flurry of excitement from the radio.

"Trueman's bowled. England are all out."

The applause dwindled. The cat licked itself lazily by the hearth, stretched and sprang lightly into the old man's chair. Maisie fumbled about in the cupboard and unloaded her shopping bags.

"He's left the top off the cough medicine again," she protested to the dingy shelves. Turning towards the door she noticed her father's gardening boots placed beside his spade.

"Oh dear." She returned to the cupboard. "So forgetful. Left the radio on. Gone without his boots." The kitchen clock ticked heavily on the mantel shelf. Twenty past three. Maisie dusted her palms against each other, tugged up the sleeves of her maroon cardigan and bent over the sink to wash. She patted the damp flannel over her face and puffed again, lightly.

"What a day," she said.

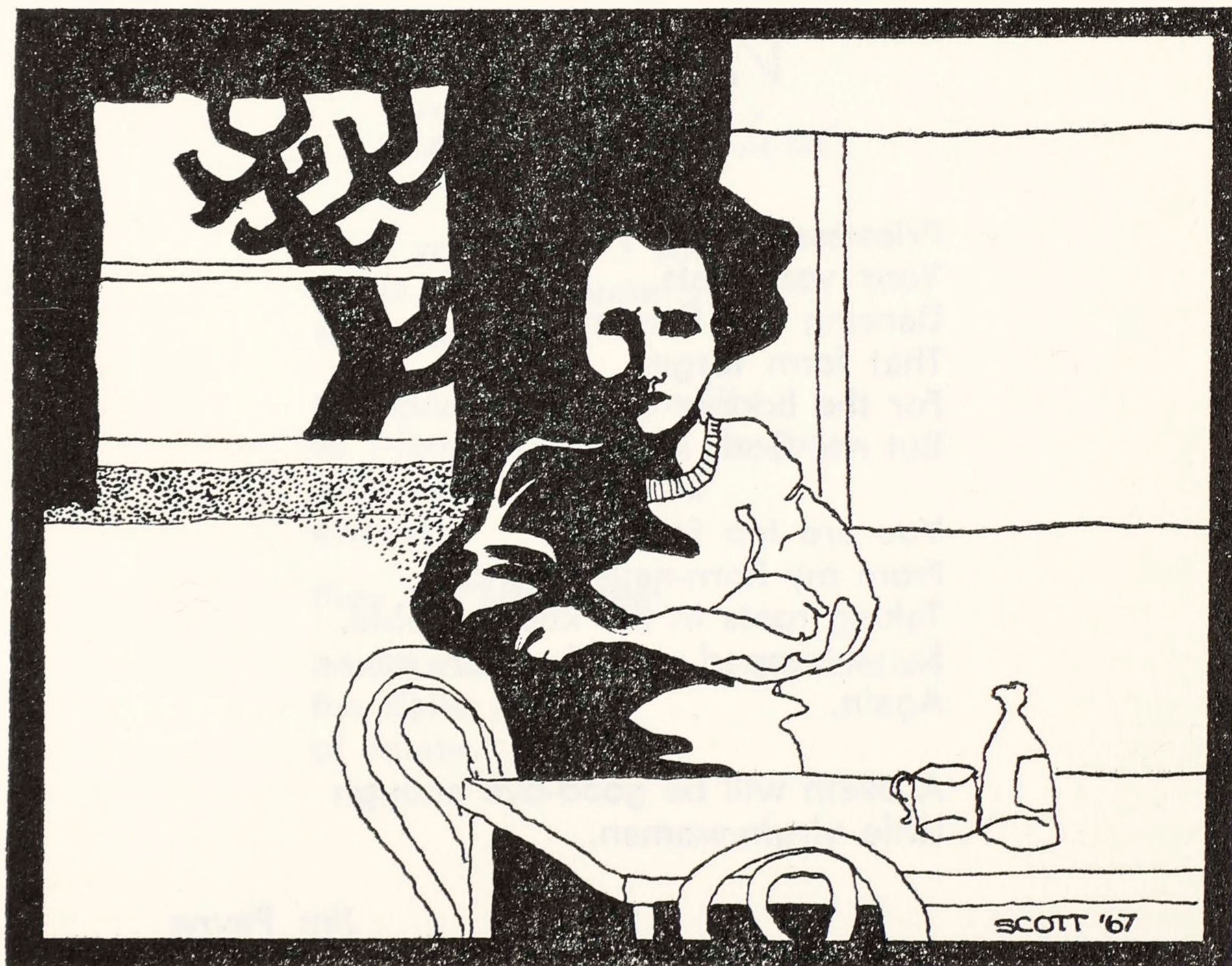
Father's tea mug was empty, dark leaves trickled up the side, and the aspirin bottle was open beside it. Maisie fussed about among the scattered objects on the table, and then swilled out his cup and the black teapot. She groped about in her handbag, scratched a match, and lit another Woodbine. Leaning against the sink she folded her arms, and stared through the window at the tangled shrubs of the garden. She knocked the drooping ash from her cigarette into the sink, and watched it blacken as it dissolved and slid towards the drain. Her

chin dropped onto the thick wool of her cardigan and she gazed at the threadbare carpet for a full minute. A copy of the *Daily Mirror* lay open before her father's chair. Finally Maisie dashed her cigarette stub out in the glass ash tray, and lifted the latch of the kitchen door.

She squashed the lid of the dustbin down more firmly, and two wasps buzzed indignantly out of the garbage. Then she tugged at the latch of the high-boarded garden gate, which was patched with an inverted, tin Bovril advertisement. The mud of the path, which led up the side of their garden towards the allotments, was caked hard and crumbling. Mrs. Curtis's mongrel dog squeezed from under the hedge and urinated hurriedly as it limped on ahead of her up the path.

Maisie gazed across the gardens, which straggled across the back of the hill toward the grammar school playing fields. Sweetpeas fluttered lazily on their trellises, and the bean poles stood lonely in the blinding summer sun. Maisie put her hand to her forehead to concentrate her vision through the bright particles of dust and light. Her father's allotment at the top of the slope was empty. She quickened her pace along the narrow paths between the rows of beans and cabbages. She began to pant and held her hand to her chest as she broke into a run. At the foot of her father's allotment she stopped and looked about quickly at the trellises and compost heap, where a sunflower bent down wearily.

She walked cautiously up the path and clasped her hands suddenly as she saw her father's body crumpled behind the compost heap. The old man lay face down in the dirt, one shoulder hunched forward, his legs stretched askew across the ground. Maisie bolted forward, col-



lapsed beside him and pulled at his shirt and arms. His body rolled over and his head lolled back. The old man's face was a hideous mess of blood and earth. Beside him, near a small heap of mangled vegetable tops, lay his rifle. Desperately Maisie tried to raise the shattered skull, but her hands tumbled uselessly before her, and she fainted forward onto the ground.

Mrs. Curtis shook the tea leaves from the pot into the drain outside the kitchen door with her firm, red arm. She cocked her head towards the allotments when she heard the distant crying sound. The mongrel barked at her as he ran up the garden.

"Shut up Paddy," she said.

She listened again. Then Mrs. Curtis pushed open her gate and began to waddle awkwardly up the path in the direction of the allotments. Her swollen legs and tight black shoes impeded her walking. She panted heavily. The crying grew louder and louder. When Mrs. Curtis got to the foot of the allotments she could clearly distinguish Maisie's voice screaming. Mrs. Curtis mumbled something to herself and hurried as fast as she could along the paths.

"Maisie . . . Maisie . . . whatever is it?"

When Mrs. Curtis reached the compost heap she could see Maisie bent over her father's body, weeping. A maroon cardigan bent over a corpse. Her shadow in the afternoon sun fell diagonally across the parched earth.

—John Ferns

Valediction

(for j)

Priestess,
Your vestments
Dancing day-flames
That form forges
For the bounce and go of sacrifice
But not God, not now . . .

You are too far
From my horn-nailed hands
Taking roots in the kitchen table,
So — trapped — and never, never
Again.

A death will be good-bye enough
Little virgin-woman.

Jim Payne

life is not usually a pastoral

moon in the sky like a
stain on the night
disintegrating.

darkness was made with an
old brush spattered with
turpentine.

they map the skies
but never the progress of
one soul falling.

and black was never the
darkest colour of
darkness.

the palette of hell is
grey and sometimes
white.

Jill Robinson

Only the Silence

who you are is a sound
made by someone else
too often.

you have no personality
so friends mock your unreality
with obscure phrases
always.

they too are unreal.

acceptance, rejection, renunciation
the daily rituals
of many.

for fear of rape
they hesitate to progress
alone.

who they are is a sound
made by man
too often.

there is no echo
and only the silence is loud.

Mary Ellen Holland



—Mary Claus

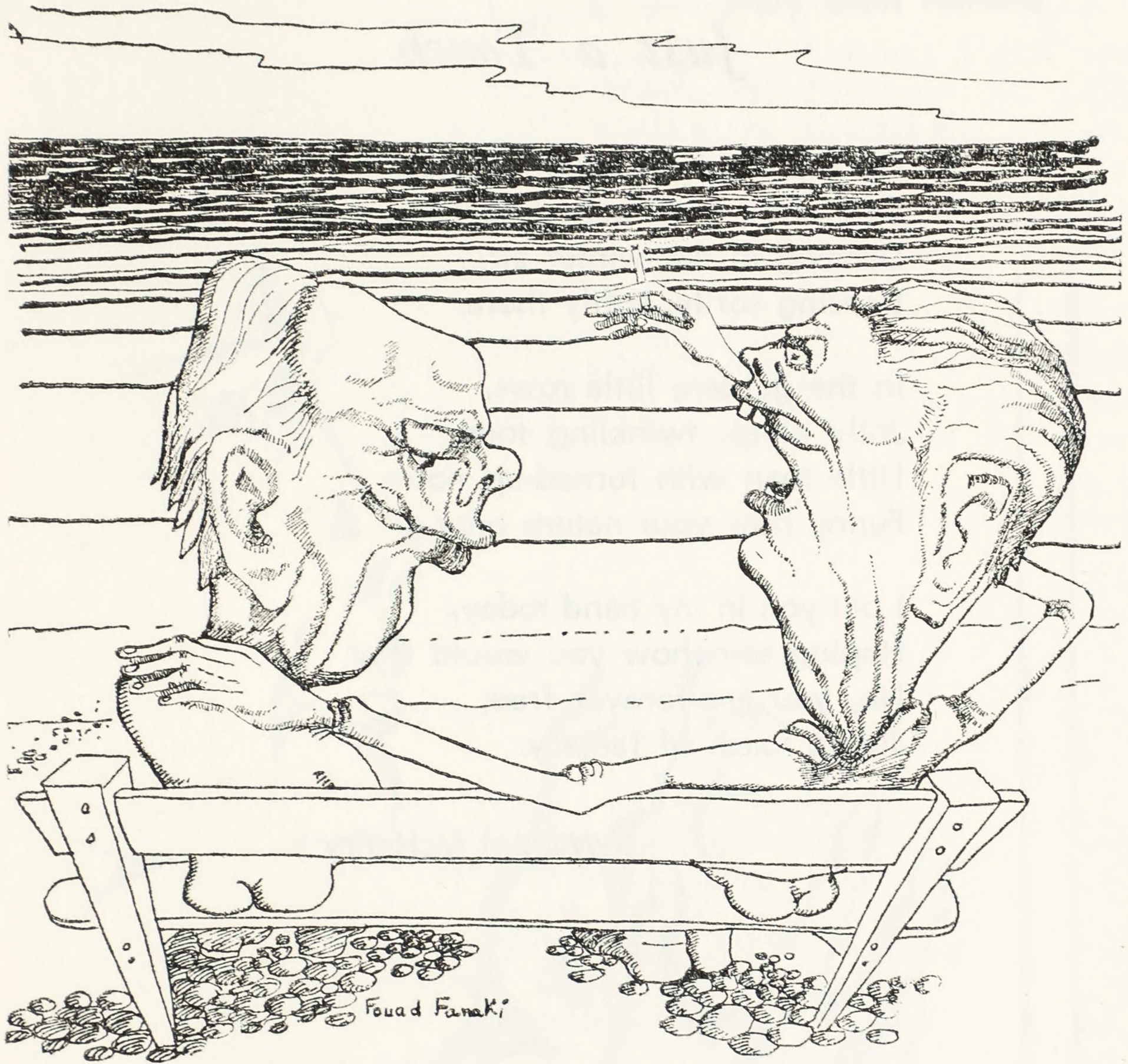
Just a Touch

On the window, laughing there,
Tiny elves with snowdrop hair
Dancing in the winter air,
Dancing softly, softly there.

In the garden; little rows,
Jolly elves, twinkling toes,
Little man with turned-up nose;
Funny how your nature grows.

I put you in my hand today,
Hoping somehow you would stay.
No, you are forever free;
Just a touch of fantasy.

Margot McHenry



SAMARITAN

This play can be played on a bare stage with a park bench in stage centre. It takes place at night. When the lights come up the STUDENT is discovered sitting on the bench. The MAN approaches him from the shadows.

Student: *(rises, walks forward, mumbles to himself.)* Sea . . . sea surface full of clouds . . . *(stumbles)* Christ! *(sits)*

Man: Do you have the time?

Student: No . . . sorry no . . . I don't have a watch.

Man: Um! Quite cold isn't it?

Student: Yes.

Man: Have you been here long?

Student: About two hours.

Man: Just sitting?

Student: Yes.

Man: Chilly East wind tonight. Are you cold? *(student shrugs, pause)* Haven't got the money for a hotel I suppose?

Student: No I haven't. I'm hoping to get a job here.

Man: Really?

Student: Yes.

Man: Where are you from?

Student: I just hitched down today from the Midlands.

Man: What part? *(no reply)* Birmingham? *(student nods.)* Ah! What part of Birmingham?

Student: On the South side.

Man: Um! Student are you?

Student: Yes . . . Yes I am.

Man: Looking for a summer job I suppose?

Student: Yes, that's right. *(pause)* I've a friend working as a barman down here, but I arrived too late to look him up.

Man: What pub?

Student: What pub?

Man: What pub's your friend working at?

Student: Oh! Ah . . . the Osborne Hotel.

Man: Oh! The Osborne, eh. Wally's place.

Student: Pardon?

Man: I said Wally's place. Wally Jackson.

Student: Oh.

Man: He's the landlord.

Student: Yes. I think so . . .

(Pause.)

Man: Care for a cigarette?

Student: Oh! Yes, thanks I will.

Man: You out of cigarettes?

Student: Yes I am actually . . . *(pause)* I smoked my last one on the bus from Ilford to Romford . . .

Man: Um!

Student: About 7:30 I got stuck on the North Circular Road.
 Man: Really.
 Student: Hitch-hiking . . .
 Man: Light? . . . (*waits*) Light?
 Student: Oh thanks.
 (*They smoke*)
 Man: So you're a student. What subject?
 Student: English.
 Man: English!
 Student: Yes. English Language and Literature.
 Man: Whereabouts?
 Student: University . . . you know.
 Man: Oh . . . I see . . . (*pause*) You play rugby?
 Student: No. No I don't.
 Man: Really?
 Student: Yes.
 Man: Do you play any sports?
 Student: Well. Soccer a bit.
 Man: Um! How do you like the East Coast?
 Student: Well, not much . . . I mean, I haven't seen it by daylight.
 Man: What about the sea? Do you like the sea?
 Student: Yes, I thought I might go swimming.
 Man: And you'll get a barman's job too, eh? That the idea?
 Student: Yes I thought I might . . . you know.
 Man: Yes.
 (*Pause.*)
 Man: You don't ask any questions.
 Student: What?
 Man: I said you don't ask any questions. For example you don't seem remotely interested in what *I* do.
 Student: Oh! Well I mean . . .
 Man: Are you?
 Student: Well sorry I . . .
 Man: Do you want to know what I do?
 Student: Yes . . . I mean, I wouldn't mind.
 Man: You don't even know my name, do you?
 Student: Well no, as a matter of fact . . . Huh! You don't know mine either.
 Man: James Weyman.
 Student: Robert Lenton.
 Man: How do you do?
 (*They rise to shake hands, then sit again.*)
 Student: Well?
 Man: I don't have a fixed job.
 Student: Oh!
 Man: I'm a writer.
 Student: Oh! How interesting . . .
 Man: Yes it is in a way.

Student: What do you write? I mean . . .

Man: Stories. Stories mainly. Under a variety of pen names. Women's magazine stuff often. Boys' stories sometimes. You know . . .

Student: Which boys' magazines? I used to read boys' magazines when I was a kid.

Man: Well, I write for quite a few. *The Jumbo, The Magician, the Cracker-Jack, the Volcano* . . .

Student: You write for *The Magician*, do you?

Man: Yes. Although actually I haven't done anything for them for some time. I used to write "Barry Brokely."

Student: Really? You mean that one about the crippled boy, who can turn into a soccer star whenever he wants to?

Man: Yes.

Student: God! I don't believe it. That was one of my favourites. Has it finished now or something?

Man: Yes. I ran out of inspiration or at least . . . it's not quite that . . . it became too painful in a way . . .

Student: What do you mean? Why?

Man: Everybody's like that except it's usually reversed.

Student: How do you mean? Why?

Man: Well, the soccer star's on the surface of most people, and the crippled boy's cringing inside. And the soccer star can't control the cripple.

Student: Maybe. Yes. Although . . . (*pause*) You know, I remember that story . . . God, fancy meeting the author . . . How queer . . . Remember that time when Barry scores the winner in the Cup Final and then he can't keep his power up and turns back into the cripple boy. He falls down on the field just before the final whistle. That was great.

Man: You liked that?

Student: Yes. Bloody exciting. We used to play it at school. My mates and I. We'd dribble the ball along and then crumple up like Barry Brokely. It was bloody funny to do it.

Man: How?

Student: Look, I'll show you. This old cup will do. You'd dribble along like this. Getting faster then . . . (*He crumples up on the stage, gets up laughing. The man looks perplexed.*)

Student: What's the matter?

Man: I don't know. Nothing. (*pause*) What else did you like about the story?

Student: (*troubled*) I don't know. I can't remember.

Man: Try.

Student: (*irritated*) I said I can't remember.

Man: Alright! Alright! Alright! (*Pause.*)

Student: You live here, I take it?
Man: Of course. I look after my mother. I have a small flat. A rather cosy place, actually.
Student: Oh! I see . . .
Man: I expect you're wondering what I'm doing about at this hour . . . in the cold . . .
Student: Well, yes, in a way. I mean . . . No, I wasn't actually . . .
Man: You weren't?
Student: Well, no. I mean you're free to come and go as you like.
Man: Yes, I suppose I am.
Student: Of course you are.
(*pause.*)
Man: Care for another cigarette?
Student: No . . . thanks, no.
Man: I get the feeling you aren't really interested . . .
Student: Pardon.
Man: Not really interested in talking to me after all . . .
Student: No, I suppose I'm not. I'm tired . . . I've had a long day.
Man: Would you care to come around to my place?
Student: Pardon.
Man: I could put you up on the couch.
Student: Um. No . . . thanks . . . I think I'd rather stay here.
Man: Why? It's awfully uncomfortable.
Student: I know. I spent a night out before in Jersey. It was bloody cold.
Man: Well, why not come around to my place?
Student: I'll tell you frankly. I've had a couple of other offers like that. One in Hampstead, which I refused, and spent the night on the beach, which again was bloody cold, and another on the Aldermaston March which had rather grievous consequences.
Man: Oh, I see.
Student: (*pause*) Well, I mean you live with your mother . . .
Man: Perhaps I do, but that's rather unfair.
Student: Is it?
Man: Yes, I'd say it is. Someone offers you hospitality and he must be . . . (*pause*)
Student: Well?
Man: You must be a bit defensive. Why not come back? Take the risk. Find out. (*laughs*)
Student: What's the point? I'd sooner stay here.
Man: So you won't accept my hospitality. I offer you a couch to sleep out the night, and you'd sooner stay here on this miserable bench and look at the sea.

Student: Yes, frankly. I would.

Man: You don't trust people, obviously.

Student: Obviously. At least not your type of . . .

Man: Pardon?

Student: I'll tell you if you want to know. Some broken down boy's story writer who hangs around seaside towns looking for young men at all hours of the night.

Man: Oh! Really!

Student: Yes, really.

Man: Rather a crude and limited description of any human being, but you categorize everyone, I suppose. Or do you?

Student: What do you mean? Of course I don't.

Man: Well, you've just categorized me, and all I did was offer you a couch for the night.

Student: Was it?

Man: Yes. Anyway what makes you think I'm queer?

Student: Oh, I don't know. Something about your manner. I wish you'd clear off and leave me alone.

Man: Yes, perhaps I'd better. But I'd say it was something wrong with you that made you so suspicious of people.

Student: Would you?

Man: Yes, I would. It seems to me that perhaps you have some curious fear of homosexuality, and half desire that kind of experience. Are you sure you're not defending your own fear? Perhaps you're a trifle paranoid?

Student: (*Rises*) Bullshit!

Man: Is it, though?

Student: Yes. Why the hell don't you just clear off? I'm tired and fed up, and I don't want to talk to you anymore.

Man: Of course it's rather ridiculous compelling someone to leave a civic bench. Why don't you leave?

Student: Perhaps I will. (*prepares to leave*) Oh, don't be stupid. You have your flat to go to with your bloody old mother — *if* she exists. I don't want to wander around anymore. (*sits*)

Man: Neither do I. I thought I'd take a walk and look at the sea. Here's a chap sitting on a bench. I thought I might have a bit of conversation to pass the time.

Student: Yes. Well, can't you see that I don't want to talk to you anymore.

Man: Yes, it becomes clearer. Perhaps.

Student: What do you mean "perhaps"?

Man: I think you do want to talk.

Student: Oh, you think I'm a bloody queer, too. Is that it?
Man: I don't know. Who brought up this whole discussion of queers anyway?
Student: I did.
Man: Why?
Student: You know why!
Man: Do I?
Student: Of course you do. You invited me to your bloody flat.
Man: (*Laughs.*) I told you I was being hospitable.
Student: Yes, I know your kind of hospitality. I've experienced it before. Remember?
Man: And you classified me on the strength of previous experience?
Student: Obviously.
Man: Obviously nothing. How do you know I'm not just a good samaritan?
Student: Oh, come on! . . . don't be bloody funny. I've told you to bugger off, and you just stick around.
Man: You could go, too. Remember?
Student: Yes, but I chose not to. I'm sitting on a bench trying to get a bit of kip, and you come along and disturb me.
Man: Well, I can sit on the bench, too, and look at the sea surely. (*pause.*) We could kip together.
Student: There! That bloody well proves it, doesn't it?
Man: (*Laughing*) Proves what? The young man clearly doesn't appreciate irony.
Student: Irony, my arse!
Man: Pardon?
Student: I said . . .
Man: Go ahead.
Student: Oh, why on earth don't you go?
Man: Why don't you?
Student: Because I love your company.
Man: Oh! So the young man's capable of irony, too. (*pause.*) Care for a cigarette?
Student: Thanks.
Man: Light?
Student: Thanks.

LONG SILENCE

They both burst out laughing, then continue smoking quietly, staring out at the sea.

— John Ferns

