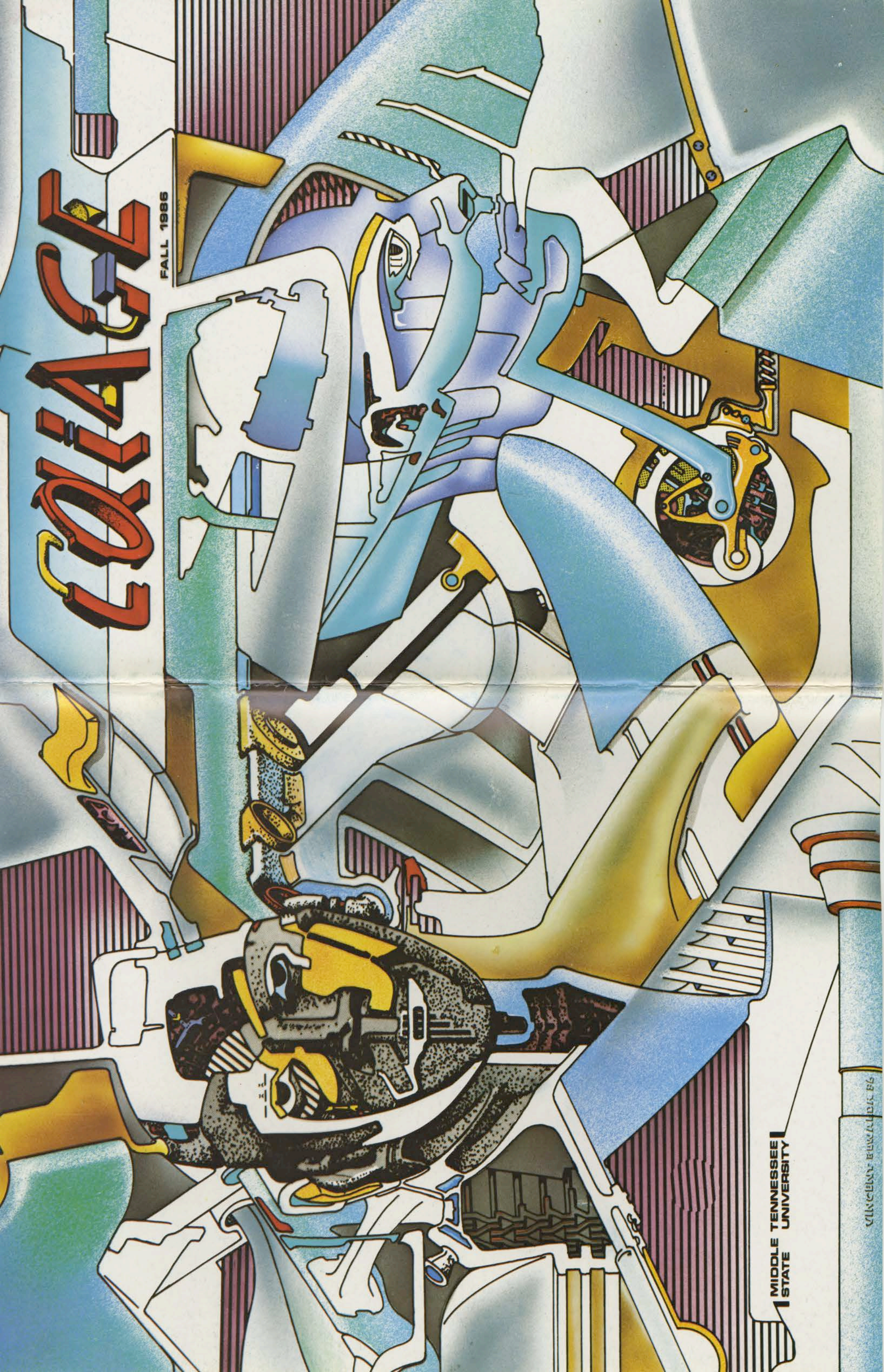


COLIAGE

FALL 1986



MIDDLE TENNESSEE
STATE UNIVERSITY

WINCELY BURWELL '86

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The Sound of One Hand Clapping for J

*The riddle is intriguing when you consider it.
But it is often the way of puzzles
that solution does not entertain so much
as possible configuration.
Seeking sometimes satisfies
where finding fails.
Try the riddle.*

*When you wrote and said you'd sprained your arm,
I thought it was a joke,
a clue to the conundrum I would recognize.
You want to clap your own hand
but find, instead, an unfitted extra piece
when your solid bones resist you.
Twisting tendons to touch
palm upon palm itself
might break the reaching wrist.
I can see you trying it, a dare.
Look at what the puzzle tells you
and the riddle.*

*The air tonight is thick and dark.
A lumpish orange moon rises late.
There is no name for this phase.*

*Alone in my bed in an empty house,
I ask unanswerable questions.
I see again smooth stones in your hands
to stir the river's surface,
snap and then the ripples.
I remember the faded puzzle piece I once found
in the cluttered corner of a dirty public room.
Now I can feel the wrench in your wrist
as you strain to hear something.
Silence roars — a riddle
or a dream.*

*Mumbling, lulled by reverie,
I feel the slow heat in my own arm
and begin to raise one hand —
palm out against the darkness.*

Dixie Highsmith

And Darkness Fell

Weaver
spin your magic
in the eloquence of grace
Golden
threads of passion
interwoven into lace.

Catch
the tiny fireflies
sitting on the pond
Turn
them into angels
flick your magic wand.

Call
to sweet Apollo
as you ride his ray of sun
Ask
him to sing his music
when the journey's end has come.

Children
hear the footsteps
as they chant across the floor
Sink
into my cradle
when I open up the door.

Weaver
spin your magic
in the eloquence of grace
Lay
me neath the blanket
in your dark and quiet place.

Dawn Jones



Kathy Brady



It came on a pearl covered wave
gossamer strings spinning from
its golden body.

Nite had fallen as it rose from
the sea,

Emerald eyes casting green
silhouettes on the rocky shore.

We ran as it scattered its
glimmering dust across
the pumice sand,
Frightened that it might take us
away to its hidden lair:

Hidden below
Where the walls glow,
green
violet
aquamarine
and stream
rises from its 14kt. skin.

Neptune's Priest

Ocean Angels ride bare-back
on sea horses with eyes that
fire ruby red
and mirror scales of gold and silver,
"Ride! Ride!" the Angels say
their glowing blue locks
twist with every sway.

Fish play tag among the
coral ruins
Boats lay snagged in their
creamy teeth,
sleeping
sleeping.

Shall we go after Neptune's priest
follow the footsteps it
left on the sand
follow it into its shimmering land
follow, follow hand
upon
hand.

Dawn Jones

THE HUMANIST BEING

I guess that when the Rapture comes, I'll stand around and nose my thumb,
While my more righteous brethren disappear,
Or sing the Armageddon Blues, as God's great wisdom melts my shoes,
And drink a little Strontium-90 beer

Cause others felt the holy urge, to pray to end the awful scourge
Of those who try to drive our kids insane,
With their lectures on equality and homosapienality,
But it seems that all I did was pray for rain.

I've had my soul turn cold and dank, from Siggie Freud and Annie Frank,
And the Whore of Babylon ... I've prob'ly kissed her.

I've spurned the Light of my TV, from Tammy, Jim, and Jimmy Lee,
Why, I thought Auntie Christ was Joesh's sister!

All my life I've prayed for peace, instead of looking for the Beast,
For all that I can tell...he might be me.

This world may be God's stepping stone, but as for me, it feels like home,
And if Heaven costs too much, at least Hell's free.

Elkin Brown

Don't Blame Your Parents, Blame the Media

By Craig Conley

Ruby recovered from a blissful unconsciousness. It seemed as if she had been out for hours, but actually it had only been a few minutes. As she washed her hair every morning she entered a state of deep relaxation and contemplation between cream rinse and conditioner. The warm water on her head always took her away.

When she awoke from her dream state, Ruby remembered her secret hair problems. "It'll take more than Jesus to help me," she said with a sigh.

Ruby had many secrets. She kept them hidden on microcassettes hidden behind the dried split peas. With her head wrapped in a Holiday Inn towel, she removed the tape recorder and whispered, "extinction is forever." Having this secret safely recorded, she put her hair in rollers. Ruby walked through her sparsely furnished living room to her bedroom. She was not poor; she had inherited from three sources. (She was a widow thrice over. It appeared that each husband committed suicide.) But she lived a simple life.

Her head in the closet, Ruby browsed for some twelve matching pairs of shoes. She finally chose yellow to wear to her Pentacostal church's "Revel Until He Comes." On the closet door was a poster of Boy George.

On her way out of the house, Ruby whispered into her secret recorder that Boy George was not only a gifted song writer but also a visual image.

She almost forgot her can of mace. "I'm not even wearing panties," she giggled to herself. "If I fell down, ANYTHING might happen!" Ruby had gotten out.

Elegant Decay

"Just a minute... I'm stark naked," Ruby called. Waiting patiently at the door was the little black girl who lived across the alley. She had two ribbons in her hair and Ruby's cat cradled in her arms. Ruby opened the door and with a smile said, "yes, Placenta, you may play with Bill Bob." As Placenta ran off, Ruby thought back to the day the girl's mother went peculiar. "Of course Philoneice always was the least bit limited," she muttered to herself.

On her way back to the bathroom, Ruby grabbed an apple from the kitchen. "An apple a day keeps the migrant fruit picker employed. I must remember to record that, along with some other things."

As she seated herself before the mirror she briefly contemplated taking the leap into the absurd that afternoon.

Meanwhile she dug her fingers into a jar of miracle beauty scrub. She knew it was just cold cream but it was fun to pretend and it came from Europe, after all. While she watched herself apply the cream to her face, a quote popped into her head: one that she had come across in her study of pagan religions. She pulled her micro-cassette recorder out from under the cotton balls and said, "Condemn me not because of mine imperfection. Mormon 9:31."

"Today may indeed be the day I leap into the utterly absurd," the thought came again as she rinsed her face. "Of course," (she put her orange dress on,) "there's always Bill Bob to consider," (and her matching orange shoes,) "and I AM in a transitional period," (and clipped on her earrings.) "But not everything in life can be interpreted metaphorically," (and didn't forget to spray on a little Midnight Passion, because anything might happen.)

"I'll take the leap next Thursday," Ruby said seriously, but her eyes were looking at the picture of her boyfriend (a younger man) on the coffee table.

Ruby went out.

The Wages of Sin is Fellowship

The day before she spoke out against Brother Swagger, a letter in the mail caught Ruby's attention. All the other pieces were addressed to "resident," but this one was addressed to "occupant." It contained a small piece of paper with a box printed on it. Next to the box were the words, "Yes, I am open to hear the still voice within." Ruby didn't mark the box, but put the paper in a safe place.

At church the next morning, irritated by the sermon, Ruby's mind wandered. She considered changing to an inter-denominational church, but then wondered what the difference between inter- and non-denominational was. There was no difference. Upon this realization, dozens of voices in her head suddenly beckoned to be heard: Spinoza, who saw God in everything, was excommunicated as an atheist. Christianity can't be narrowed down. Church is a verb, not a noun. Christianity is supposed to be good news, not good advice. One should be SPIRITUAL rather than religious. Faith is not an opinion but a state.

Brother Swagger wiped tears from his face as he strutted back to the pulpit to refer to the giant Bible there. "We Freewill Dunkers know that a sprinkle just isn't good enough," he cried.

Ruby's head felt as if it would explode. With a fleeting enthusiasm, she stood up. But instead of saying "Amen," she shouted a few garbled sentences about the Wholly Gauche and then quietly left.



Kathy Brady

That afternoon she was visited by the Bible Believers. They offered her a number of tracts. Later, the Pew Sitters came knocking. They tried to lay their hands upon her. The door bell rang again that evening; Ruby knew it must be the Soul Winners. She got out the little piece of paper. "Afterall," she said to herself, "there's no Buddha in Chattanooga." Knowing full well the danger of becoming too inward, She checked the box.

Something Gained in Translation

The person on the other end of the telephone lost her train of talk. Ruby did not say anything for a moment, but instead closed her eyes and enjoyed the silence. She did this often, but was particularly amused with herself at having once done it (unconsciously) at a mime's performance.

"Last night I dreamt of Manderley," Ruby said suddenly, but the person had begun talking again, and didn't hear her.

When the person started talking about the West, Ruby realized that it was a wrong number. When she had answered the phone, the person said, "Is this Rudy?" Ruby had innocently said "yes," and was then given no opportunity to break in.

Her interest had been sparked slightly when the person said that she didn't go to church but could often be found sitting alone in churches. Ruby was often interested in people who knew what they believed, or at least believed that they knew. That was why she had been visiting the Rabbi regularly, and also why she avoided the married couple down the street (a former priest.) It was only when the person said that the South was n't her cup of tea that Ruby made an end to the conversation. "I am American by birth, and Southern by the grace of God," Ruby said calmly and then hung up.

THE POEM: A LAST RESORT

*Taking a last resort
I come to this room
empty handed,
giftless--
there is nothing to be said*

*If I should dance,
what would these flabby body parts
form for me,
leave behind to be remembered?*

*Spilling out passions
like a drunken vacationer,
I look back--
a little lonely,
beer-soaked, blind,
embarrassed for having howled at the moon.*

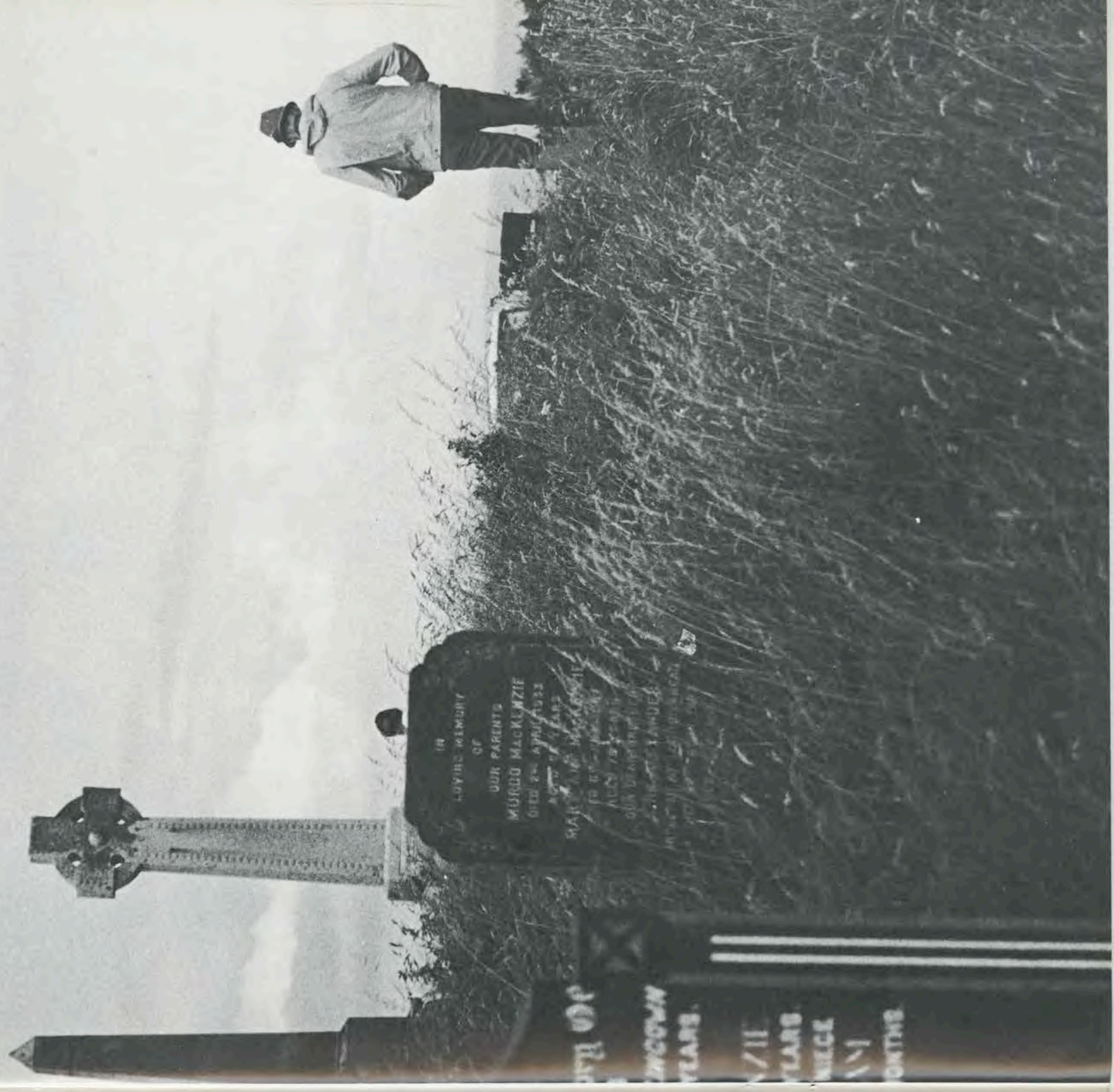
William S. Webster 1982

IN MEMORY OF A FOOL

Attracted by a siren shard of light
Flung through the inky black curtains of darkness,
The scaly little fool hurried lustfully to the pleasures
Lying beyond the caresses of the beckoning source.
Hungriily the fool has searched the night,
Longing, craving the one thing he has not found —
A light! — a light which he can touch and hold...
His nocturnal winging through the city streets
Has made him weary of these fake sirens
Who sing to him, teasing, taunting safely
From within their tombs of glass and plastic!
Yet this time the fool will win.
he has found a virgin so pure and new
That the heat of her burning passion
Draws him in like a drunk sailor to a whore.
Round and round he circles his new-found love,
Closer and closer until he can stand it no more.
Grinning like a tiger, he plunges toward her,
And joins her in an embrace that will last forever.
Ensiled in tallow, buried with a candle
Thrown out by a lover eons before after a night's love,
The fool is found one day in the far future
On the blue, radiation-poisoned planet Earth
By alien archaeologists looking for clues to the past.
And for a long-gone world so virgin and pure
That moths could live...

Dan N. Clark

Harrison McClary



A Portfolio

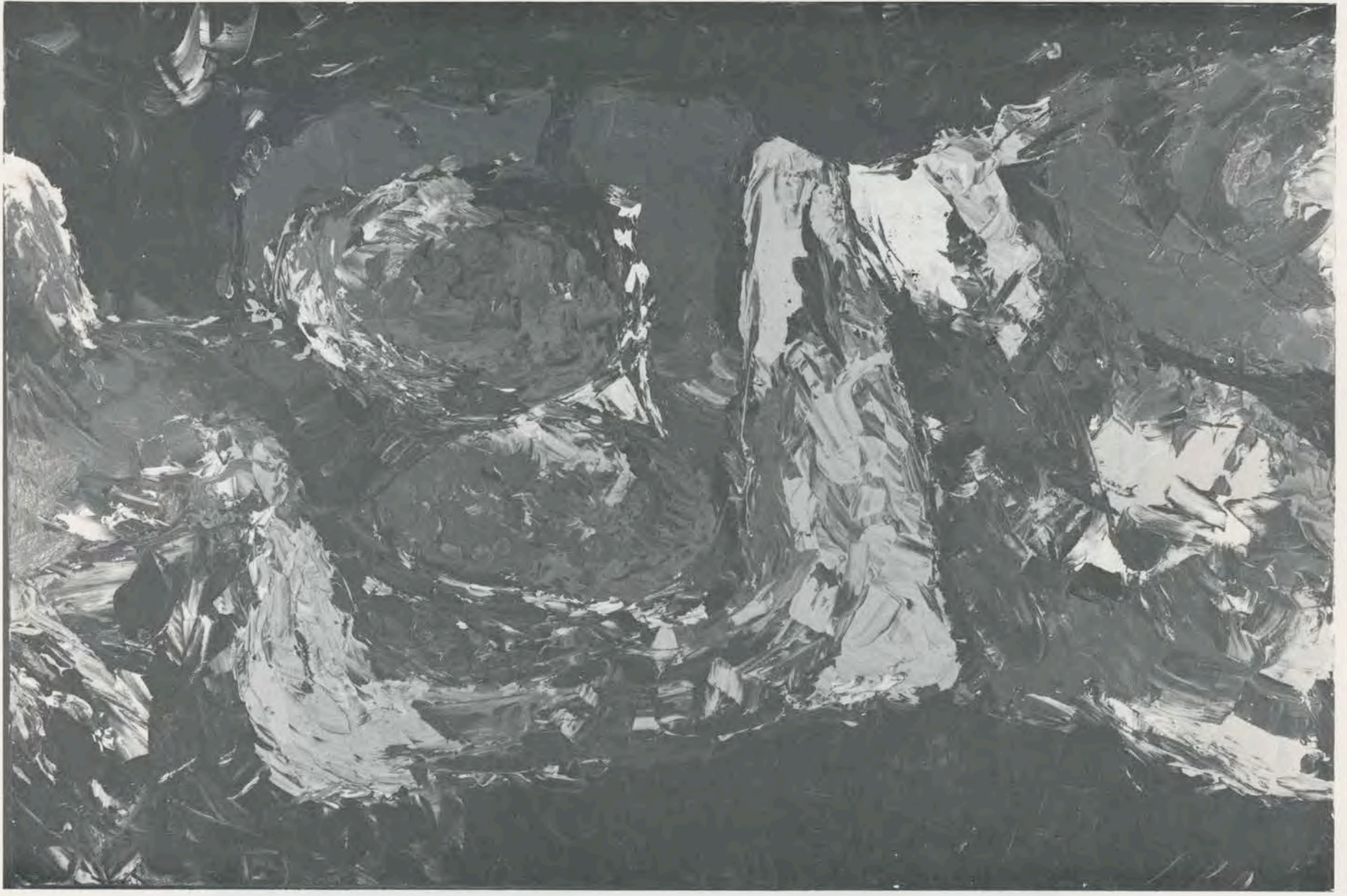


My paintings are of the figure. I learn from the figure through abstraction. These paintings are about that learning process. I am concerned with texture, color, line, and shape relationships. I am also interested in the psychology of the painting. These figures wouldn't have the impact that they do without those concerns of texture, line, etc. The texture, line, and color wouldn't have the same impact without the subject of the figure.

The psychology of the painting would be different if I just made a painting about paint or just of their figure. But the painting takes on a different meaning if the subject is paint, the figure, and how I got the paint on the canvas. It's about questions of how the figure is seen. The figure becomes a series of shape relationships instead of a portrait of a woman. When a painting is working on all these levels, one has enough information to say if it's good or not.

Art is about life. Life is about relationships. Without successful relationships, art doesn't work. After all, there is more to marriage than just sex and there is more to a painting than just the image.

LYNN GREER



In my work I attempt to speak to an individual humanity — not in a large, all-encompassing manner, but in a small, personal, intense way. I paint individual experience. My paintings communicate emotion more than a particular meaning, but often meanings creep in underneath emotion. Things do not have to be laid out in black and white to have effect.

I work in oils primarily, and my paintings evolve through three basic stages. First, I create a collage using clippings from magazines, photographs, and xeroxed pages from various books. This allows me to manipulate the subjects and shapes in my paintings almost as freely as I manipulate the paint. For instance, I can make a hamburger float in the middle of an otherwise peaceful scene, or I can simply take two previously unrelated subjects and make them relate in any number of ways. Second, I do several preliminary drawings to help solidify the idea and work out many bugs. Finally, I take what I have learned from the drawings and apply that to the painting itself.

Presented here is a painting now in progress. When the painting is completed, the background will be contrasting purple and blue hues — with this color theme carried on throughout the painting. The brushstroke will be quick and fluid, suggesting movement.

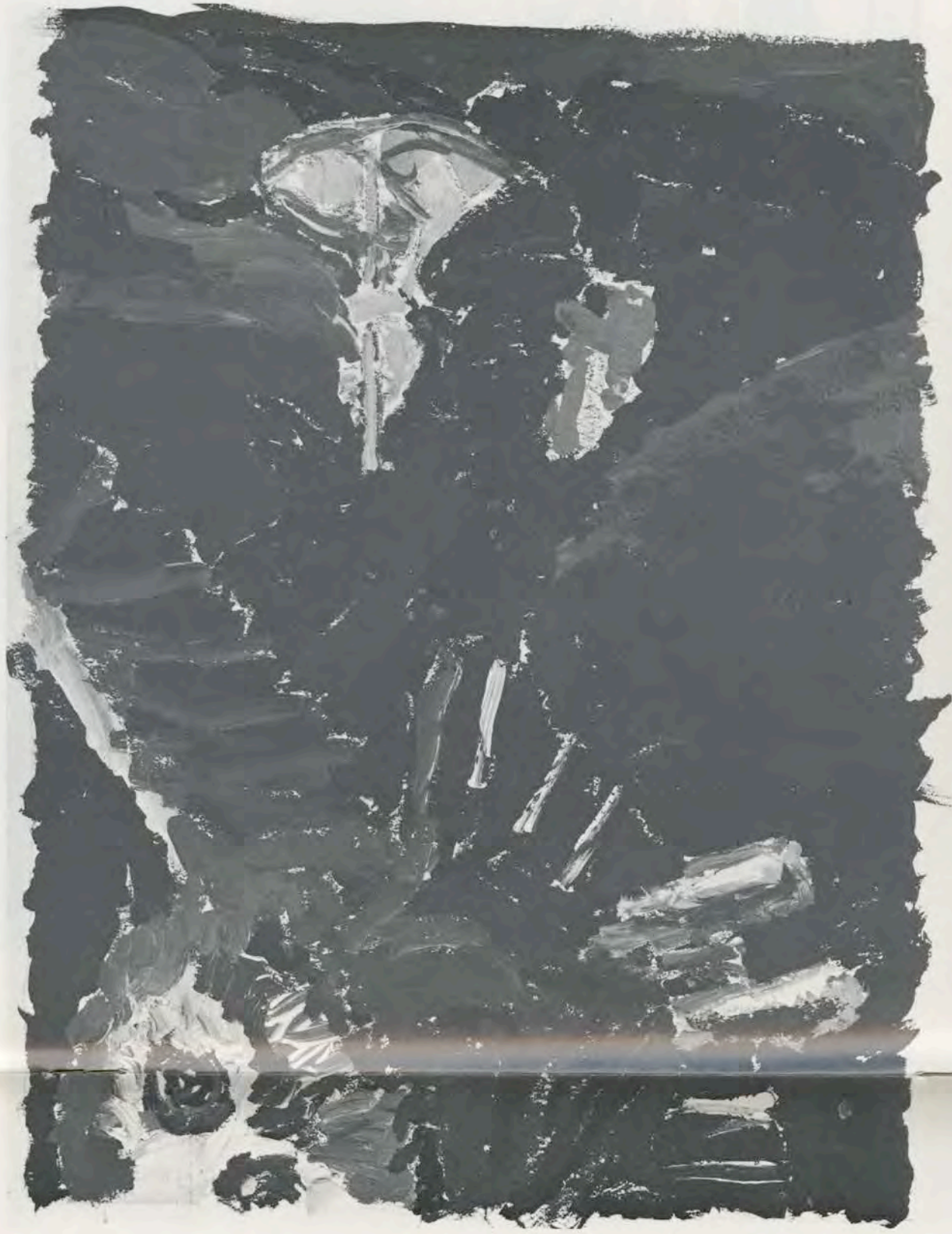
In this particular piece, the subjects complement one another in a way that may be more obvious than in much of my other work. The presence of the piper serves to recall the music of flute/pipes, which the liveliness of line and the blue hues will echo. The bird in flight also suggests the feeling of music as something alive and fleeting. There is a melancholy element in this composition, reinforced by the purple hue and the fact that an owl is a nocturnal animal. Also, both the flute and the owl make haunting sounds. This painting is meant to communicate a moment, a note hanging in mid-air, a fleeting emotion.

Just as the Impressionists captured a moment of reflected light, so I hope to capture a moment in the currents of the soul. I believe that the more truly personal my paintings are, the more widely they will be understood — although not necessarily on an intellectual level.

*"...and seek those (themes) which your own,
everyday life offers you; describe your sorrows and
desires, passing thoughts, and the belief in some
sort of beauty ... describe all these things with
loving, quiet, humble sincerity; and use, to express
yourself, the things in your environment, in the images
from your dreams and the objects from your memory ..."*

Rainer Maria Rilke

Kathy Broyles



Currently, I am involved in a systematic abstracting process using the landscape as a source and relying heavily on drawing as a means of gathering visual information. The drawing is to not only record what I'm studying but also to interpret my perceptions or have a way of working out visually how I perceive and translate nature into a two-dimensional form — a study of drawing in itself as well as a study of the landscape.

This project is designed not necessarily to produce great art, but rather to develop discipline, to build integrity, and lay a solid foundation that will strengthen my work attitudes as a painter.

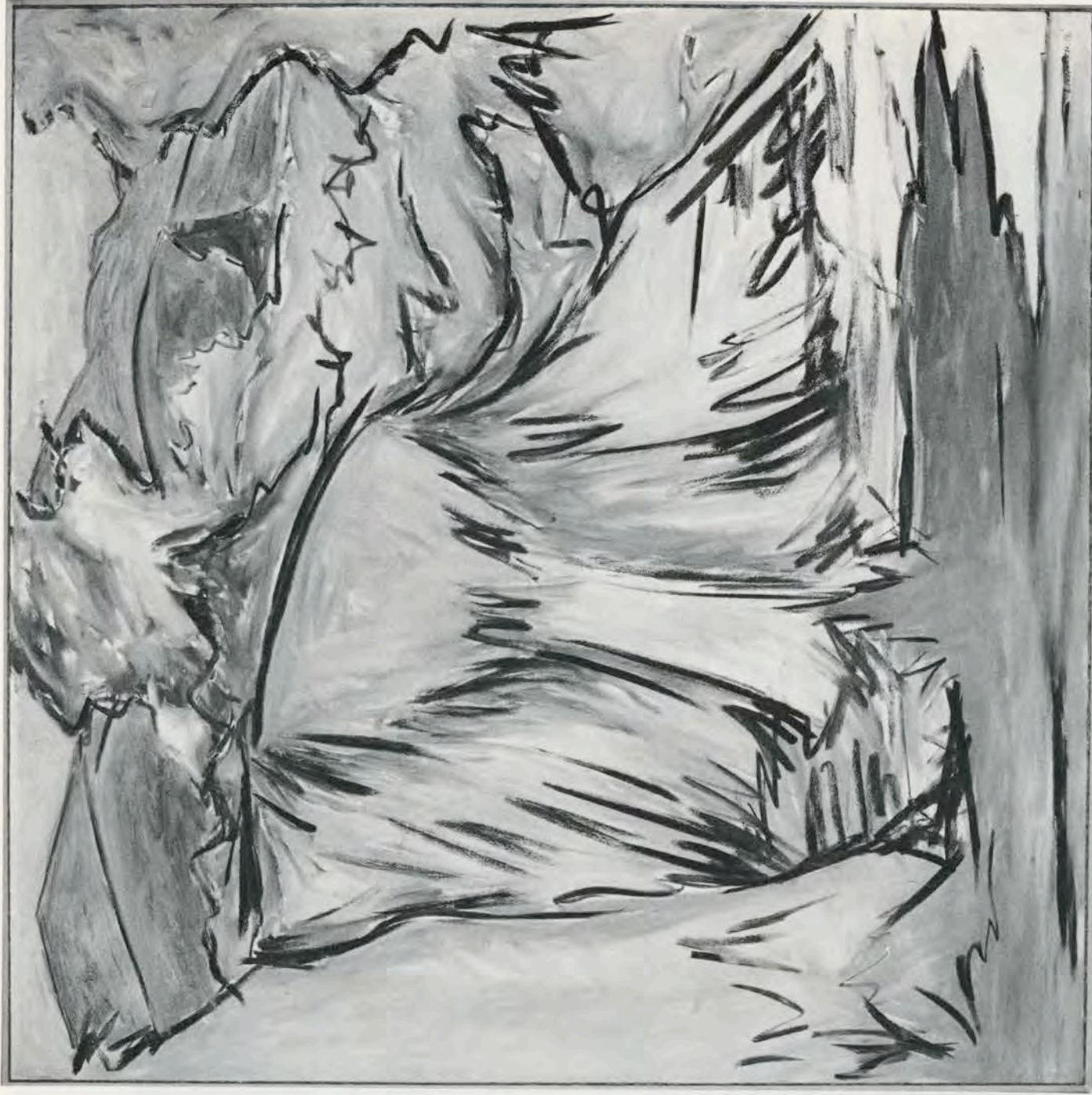
More specifically, I am beginning with the basic element of art — the mark, and how marks can relate to the landscape and how they can form drawings and paintings. My painting now is essentially about the "act of making marks" — about drawing. I am starting on one end of a scale, the objective, and moving towards the subjective and/or conceptual in my work, carrying the visual information through a gradual process from realism to abstraction.

I feel it is important, even necessary, to carefully study all points along the way in this development, and to give every aspect thorough attention and consideration — to dig deep from start to finish.

I have no preconceived idea about where I want this process to end up ... I am simply working and allowing revelations to come to me as I carry out this project.

The end result is simply the process itself and developing that process to fine tune my method of working — to provide for a lasting foundation on which to build hereafter.

Randy Livingston



Of all the things that come to mind about the ongoing series of utility vehicles I have been painting for the past year this is the most important: that I have an obvious concern for selective information (the abstract quality of the object) and an interest in realism.

The sixties and seventies saw a reawakening of interest in realism. It was during the sixties that a "new type" of imagery established itself. It was called Photo-Realism. This term simply meant that a photographic image had been used wholly or in part to generate a painting.

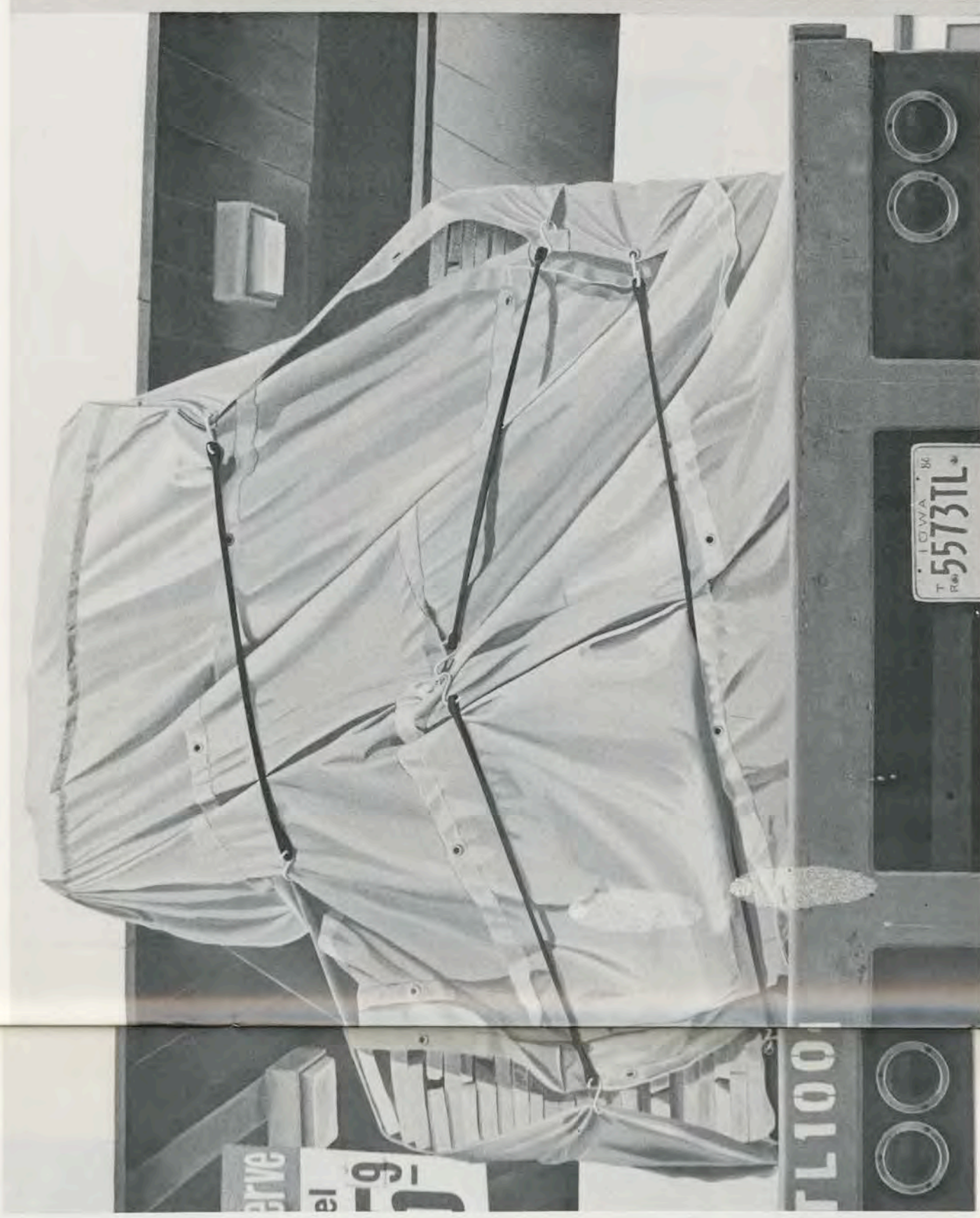
In the fall of '85 I became curious about this method of working. I decided to make several paintings of police cars using the Photo-Realist approach. Much to my surprise, what some might consider to be an empty exercise in copying turned out to be more abstract than the abstract paintings that I had previously done. Suddenly I found myself immersed in a series of visual reconstructions. "Consumed by them" would be more apt.

Realism establishes an immediate flow of understanding that bridges language and culture. It is a way of responding to our external world and we react to that. Even though it is object centered, the abstract elements such as arbitrary color, the controlled field of view, and the psychology of the setting are the most interesting to me.

For most, seeing the back of a truck happens when we overtake one on the Interstate. It is unusual to think of walking up behind one to examine it. But when searching for subject matter, I do just that. I often drive up I-24 to the '76 Truck Stop, not for coffee and donuts, but to concentrate on the behemoths and photograph them where they stand. There they are ... seems like hundreds of them lined up. Some drivers sleeping, diesel engines running perpetually. I am now deep in the bowels of commerce. This 24 hour a day activity is an essential waystation for everything from the restocking of Super Kroger to delivering the mail. It would seem we would have a great interest in something so vital. Not so! We just want our cereal, hair dryers, and TV sets to be in the stores when we need them. We don't care how they get there!

For me, realism is perhaps a way to further clarify life. There is much satisfaction in the illusion from a referential point of view. But because I am concerned with shape relationships, color, edge, surface, space, etc., I am located within the realm of the formalist. After all, it's not that I want to walk the fence between abstraction and realism. It is really the link between the conceptual and the "real" that holds my interest.

Ron Porter



How can I be snow?

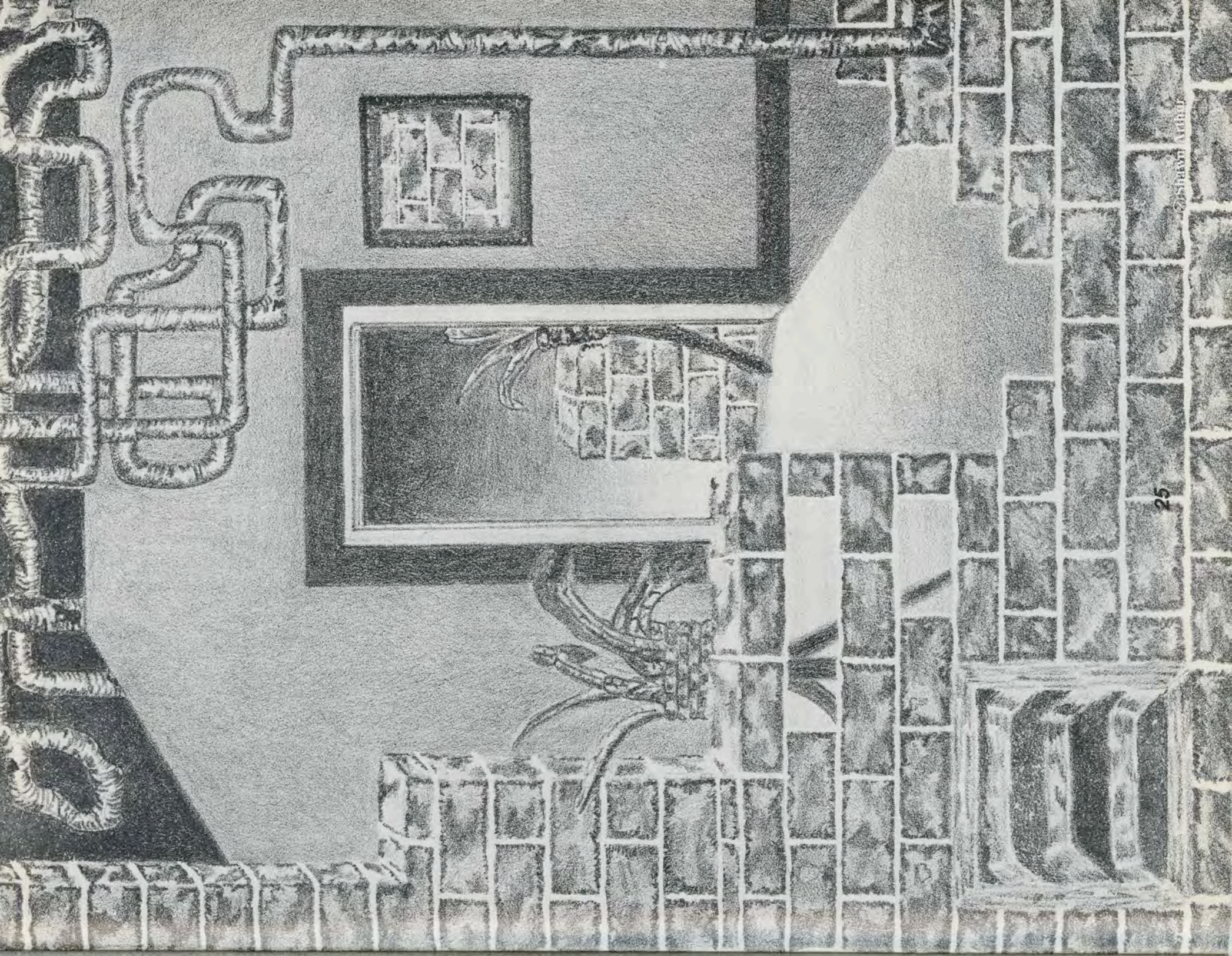


⊗ Kathy Brady

All white,
cold to the touch,
wet like tears
and it always goes away

Phil Parkerson

A Portfolio



© 1987 JAMES JUDYLL



James Judyll
Sept. 17, 1987

STRUGGLE FOR A SELF-PORTRAIT

These battered and bruised hands — once hewed stone in dark hours — sometimes, in necessity, only in darkness.

All night I worked with hammer and chisel until I thought myself blind from the banging and chipping away.

Then I emerged exhausted as morning light found one small cellar window to see the stone — an ancient monument — transformed.

I clearly saw details of a portrait formed in darkness from stone. I saw it bleed fresh blood, though before there was only the stone the dark the necessity.

William S. Webster



"He travelled a good deal

chiefly for his company

Suppose we call him
but sometimes on his own.

He bought a few paintings by

French artists like Tal Coat;
a man commended

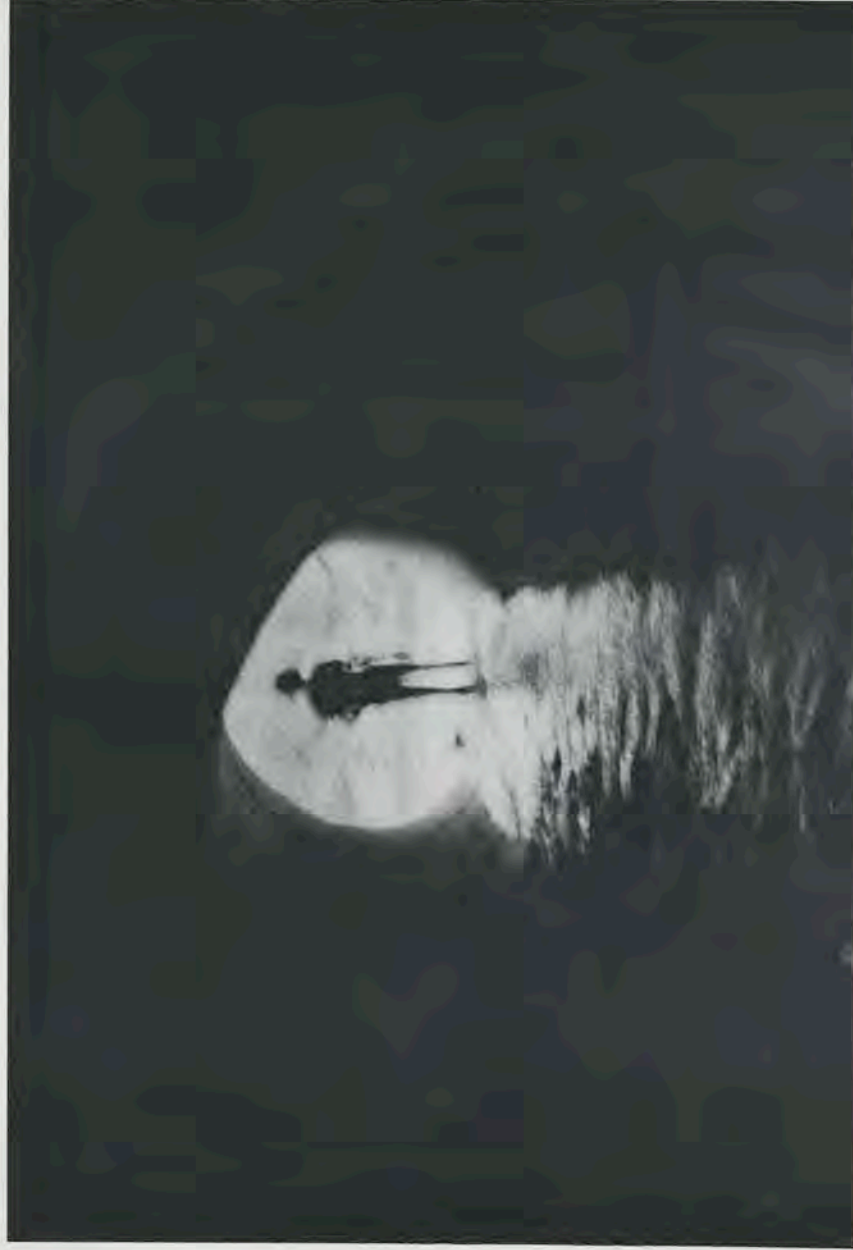
...an impressive collection of phonograph records...

He grew fond of gardening.
cultivated

He continued to work at the

insurance company
who enjoyed imitating himself.
until his death..."

Richard Keel



Steber

The Bandage Syndrome

Her younger sister had been at the shelter for battered women five nights, four days. And each day and night, there had been a collect phone call. Last night's had stretched on for sixty-two minutes. She knew this precisely because her husband had kept up with the passing minutes, sitting across from her at the lace-clothed table, watching comedians on television, and checking his diver's watch which glowed in the dark and had a face crammed full of numbers.

When she had finally hung up, she said, "I noticed you were keeping up with the time," and he had replied, "sixty-two minutes is over an hour."

She knew he was displeased because the night before they had argued about her involvement with "The Cause" of her familial women. He had told her that it was ridiculous, that she couldn't even take care of herself--her car was falling apart this very minute--and yet she was busy pouring money into the bottomless pit of her sisters' self-imposed misery.

She had recognized these as cruel and intentionally hurtful words, but had not hurled any back at him. She realized there was truth in what he said. She also knew that he was incapable of comprehending the emotions which drove her to go on spreading herself like a blanket across her sister's various fires. She could not make him see that "withdrawing the telephone test," as he put it, was the equivalent of abandoning her sister on a battlefield with her guts spilling out of a hole in her heart. Neither could she bring herself to return his cruelty by reminding him that three years ago she herself had been a battered woman and he the battering man.

Coming as he did from an environment of comfort and devotion, he was too smugly contemptuous of her poor and broken family's "chosen squalor" to even begin to mount an argument aimed at humbling him into empathy.

He was a man whose mother had, as was her custom, sent him an enormous carton of ethnic delicacies and a check on his thirtieth birthday a month ago, a gesture which, as was his custom, had yet to be acknowledged and might remain so for half a year. He was an only child two thousand miles from home by choice, a child who called four times and wrote twice in a given good year, but who was quick to criticize other people's sons for neglecting their loving mothers.

He was as beyond her as she was beyond him.

The chasm between them had been widening all week. At some point, a bomb had been detonated in their relationship with the coming of this latest crisis. The explosion had been insidious and went unnoticed. Now, they were experiencing fall-out sickness. Symptoms were beginning to appear with alarming regularity. In the hour they had together each morning, and in the hours between supper and sleep each night, there was a tension born of the surreptitious viewing of joint deterioration.

On Monday, they had made the hour journey into the city together where they had a clandestine meeting with the sequestered sister and her toddler daughter. They had seen the bruises and heard the most recent installment if a five year saga, punctuated by the toddler's cranky cries. The sisters had shared the duty of distracting the unhappy child, along with their impressions of victimization. They had reviewed the literature and effects, strained to formulate a facsimile of philosophy which might function as life preserver in the raging sea of love's institutions, had talked about structural revisions which might facilitate more effective navigation.

The older sister had had to work at discussing these matters sincerely without, at the same time, reminding any of them that the self-possessed man eating chicken with them in the here and now had sat upon her chest and tried to strangle her between the bucket seats of their vehicle in the not yet distant past. Neither did the younger sister give any indication of remembering this event, nor the one which had preceded it.

The husband expressed no gratitude for this small kindness, if indeed he even noticed it. The few comments he had made in the course of the two hour meeting were terse condemnations of the current offender, advice centered on meeting hostility with homicide, or on pronouncing peripheral characters irredeemably insane. Not once did he identify himself as an offender, offer any insight from the other side of the wall, or disclose anything about himself.

Instead, he had sat stiffly inclined against an unused doorframe, palm and elbow supporting his face, upon which a disgusted frown was etched, lips locked beneath a hedge of hair. When the sisters had hugged and cried in parting, there in the crowded parking lot of a fast-food restaurant, he had looked away, and then pulled three dollar bills from his black leather wallet. These he handed to the younger sister.

The next day, he gave his wife a ten dollar bill, admonishing her to make it last through what remained of the week. That night he had pointed out that, once again, she had neglected to get a receipt for the 40% of the ten that she had spent mailing out \$7.00 worth of free copies of her new chapbook, and told her that her "spaceyness" remained an irritation. She did not bother to point out to him that in

(continued on p. 32)

by **Kathy Brady**

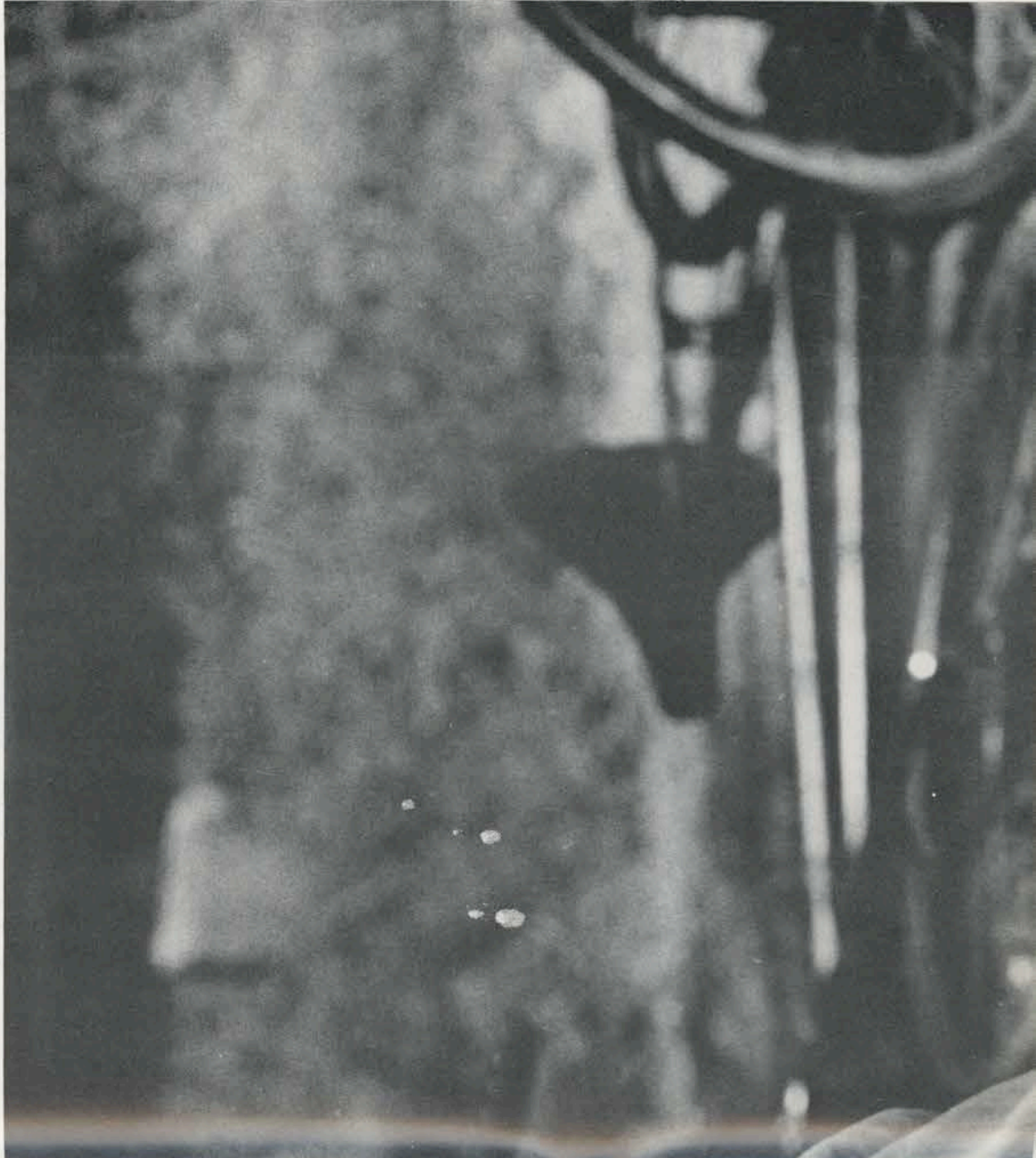
Caroline Holland



Funeral

we stand out in the drizzling
 rain and you point to where the bulldozer
 will cut a new road. you speak of modified
 A-frames and decks over deep ravines.
 there is a mist rising above the hollow.
 i cannot remember how it felt to be your wife.
 you kick at the ground with the toe of your boot
 sending sprays of dirt into my tire ruts.
 i recall attending the funeral of some
 relative i never really knew back when
 i was just a child. it was raining
 and all the women were crying.

Kathy Brady



their seven years together they had never once deviated from the 1040 EZ tax form, nor had they ever earned enough between them to itemize anything. What she said was that, hopefully, she would soon remember to ask for a receipt and that once this miracle occurred perhaps the act would become a habit, and her cycle of "lackadaisicality" would be forever broken. He did not return her optimism nor her humor.

On Wednesday she had stopped going to work, even though she was only eleven hours away from the end of an properly given notice. She did not call her supervisor, a woman given to an impersonal commanding dullness. Nor did she contact either of the two people who had offered her new positions. Yesterday, on her day off, she had fetched her husband from his job and had taken him to see a physician who had diagnosed the swelling on his sketching arm as acute tendonitis. The patient later refused to secure the medicines prescribed because they would be "too expensive," and after a brief and meager lunch, had his wife drive him back to the metal shop where he planned to carry on single-handed.

"Why are you doing this?" she asked. "Because I'm desperate," he answered, "aren't you?" "Nope," she said smiling, "not yet." He had no verbal reply for this, only a tight-mouth nodding as his steel-toed boots crunched away from her across the gravelled lot.

It was on Thursday evening that the sixty-two minute call had occurred, a call which confirmed her worst fear, and that the younger sister would weaken and decide to return to the hometown where the stage and cast were set for continuing the melodrama. It was money which drove the sister, a factory job processing chickens, four years' seniority, insurance, security, the ability to go on in a semblance of familiarity between the walls of a rented mobile home with a mother who fluc-

tuated between indifferent and meddlesome. The older sister bit her tongue repeatedly during those sixty-two minutes, telling the younger that it was her life, her decision, and struggling to conjure up the respect and support necessary to repair the young woman's battered self-esteem. Nonetheless, her sister's choice was a devastating disappointment, and hanging up the receiver, she declared, "That did it. I will make myself scarce. They know where I live."

Considering that her remarried father had not visited her in a decade, and that neither of her sisters or her mother did so more than a couple times a year, it was a statement bordering on laughable, and reflecting little more than an attempt at dignified retreat in the face of an overwhelming advancement in a long and lingering case of impotence.

Her husband raised his eyes from the comedian contorting on the television, and fixed her with a steely stare, "None of them are welcome here," he said, a pronouncement having the echo of a hammer thudding against a thinly-carpeted and warping wooden floor. This was a first in their partnership, and his wife stammered incoherently. "There are two people in this relationship," he said, "not just one." "But what you're saying is that my family cannot visit me in my own home!" she exclaimed. It seemed the worst thing he had ever said to her. "Our home!" he shouted. His steely gaze hardened into a fixed and nasty stare. She thought of attack dogs, and the folklore surrounding them. Drop your eyes or they will go straight for the throat. It occurred to her that once you have been battered, the fear cannot be eradicated.

She drove to a convenience market and bought herself a cola, an indulgence of the first order since she had all but given up drugs like alcohol and caffeine in a quest for increased longevity. She laughed at the irony of her choices. She considered driving

herself to the shelter and imploring refuge from the wreckage of her life. But she knew that visible wounds were essential, knew that hers lacked priority in a war strewn with the bodies of burned children and the ghosts of gut-shot girls.

She went home and retired to a lumpy couch whose broken springs disallowed motion, negated positional change. She read late into the night, an anthology of passages plucked from diaries representing the lives of many women. Their collective pain enveloped her. The discomfort she felt was immense, and she could not stop envisioning her sister's bruises. Just before dawn, she forced herself to confront her husband's sprawled and snoring form and to ask of it a portion of the mattress three upon the floor, crammed between the lace-clothed table and a corner made of walls.

At 7:30 he woke her and she drove him to his job. She was due at hers by 8. Ten o'clock found her still home, alone at the table, staring into space. She did not have the strength for doing anything. She unplugged the phone, having no words left with which to comfort her sister, her mother, her boss lady, her landlady, the lady-in-the-moon. Her head felt light with whispers. Her heart felt like a rock.

Across town, beneath a high metallic ceiling of corrugated blue, her husband packed lawnmower blades into crates destined for distribution to thousand nameless hands. He exchanged pleasantries with his male coworkers. In his head, he counted off hours and dollars and cents. Relating these to an exponential increase in pleasure, he was happy for the moment, the sling upon his arm waning in importance. Later, he knocked it accidentally against a pillar of concrete, and listened to the singing of his pain. He thought about using his good arm again, after the swelling went down. He imagined all the things he would set straight at home once he could make a proper fist.

C O L L A G E

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Produced By James Tucker

Directed By Vincent Buwalda