

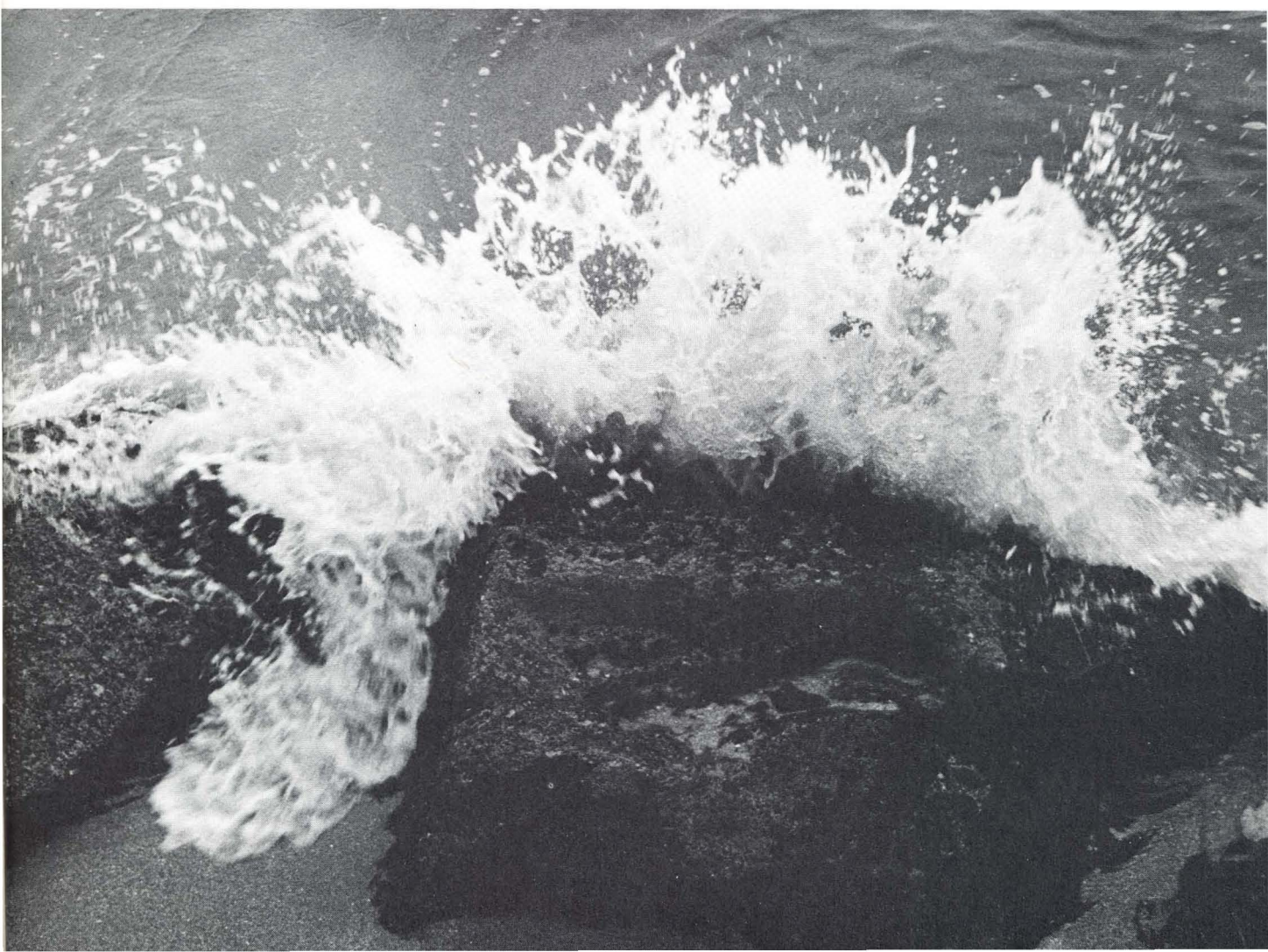


# ODYSSEY 92





*Cynthia Potaczala*  
*Black & White Photo*  
*8" x 10"*





# 1992 ODYSSEY

## STAFF —————

*editors: P. C. Williamson*

*T. Letourneau*

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*photographer & cover art*

*R. J. Potaczala*

*Special thanks to Douglas*

*And all of our  
contest judges*

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**1992 —  
ODYSSEY  
WINNERS**

**CAMERA —**

Mark Henry	11
G. S.. Horsford III	23
R. J. Potaczala	2
Cynthia Potaczala	40

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Amy Dankert	21
Louise LaPeters	17
Lisa Manchester	13

**DRAWING —**

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Mark Henry	35
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**FICTION —**

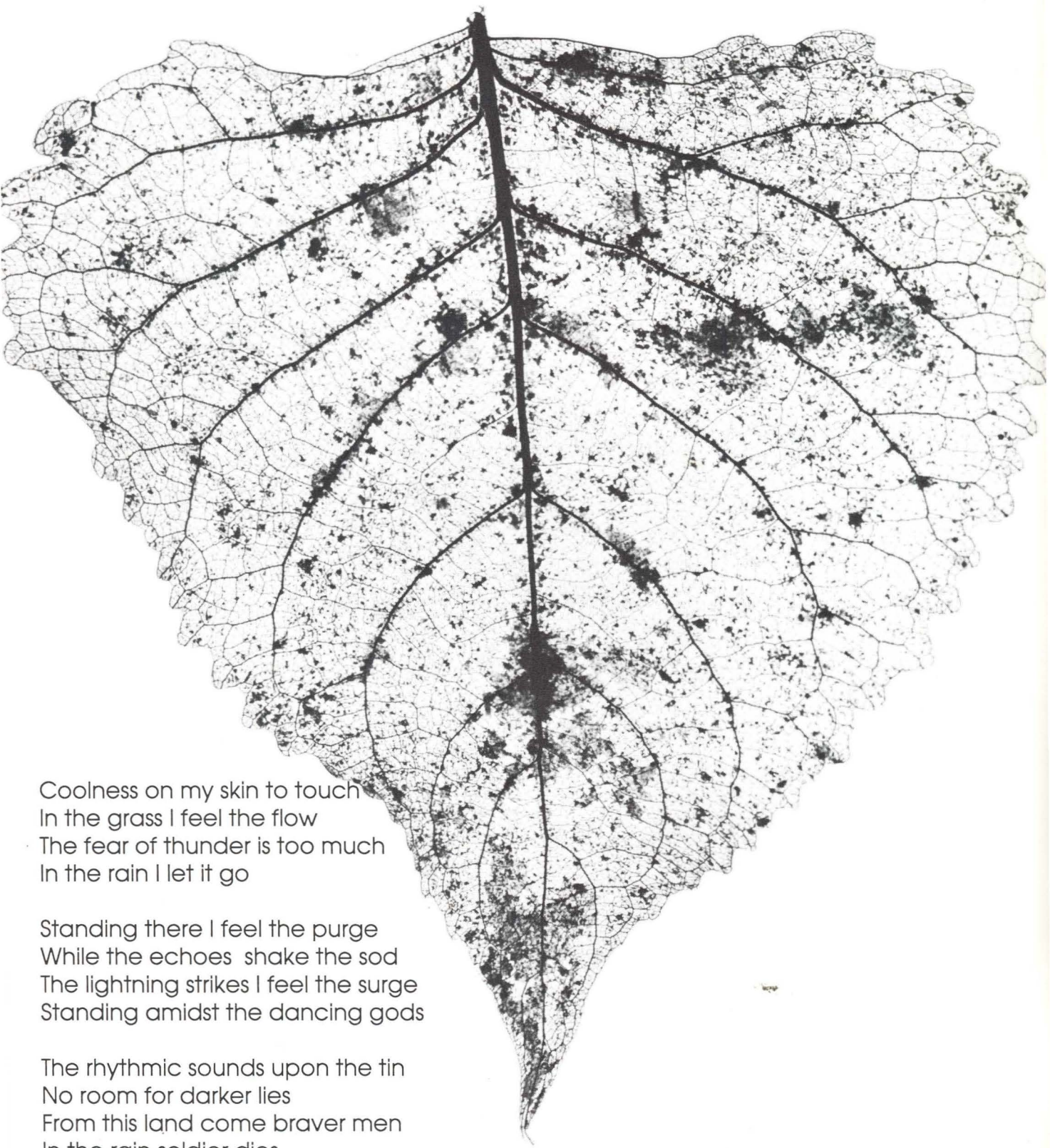
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Coolness on my skin to touch  
In the grass I feel the flow  
The fear of thunder is too much  
In the rain I let it go

Standing there I feel the purge  
While the echoes shake the sod  
The lightning strikes I feel the surge  
Standing amidst the dancing gods

The rhythmic sounds upon the tin  
No room for darker lies  
From this land come braver men  
In the rain soldier dies

In the silence rhythm flees  
They come back on paths well trod  
Blind to every eye is me  
Still amidst the dancing gods

*Ronald J. Potoczala*  
*Black & White Photo*  
*8x10*

*-- Michael Bruning*



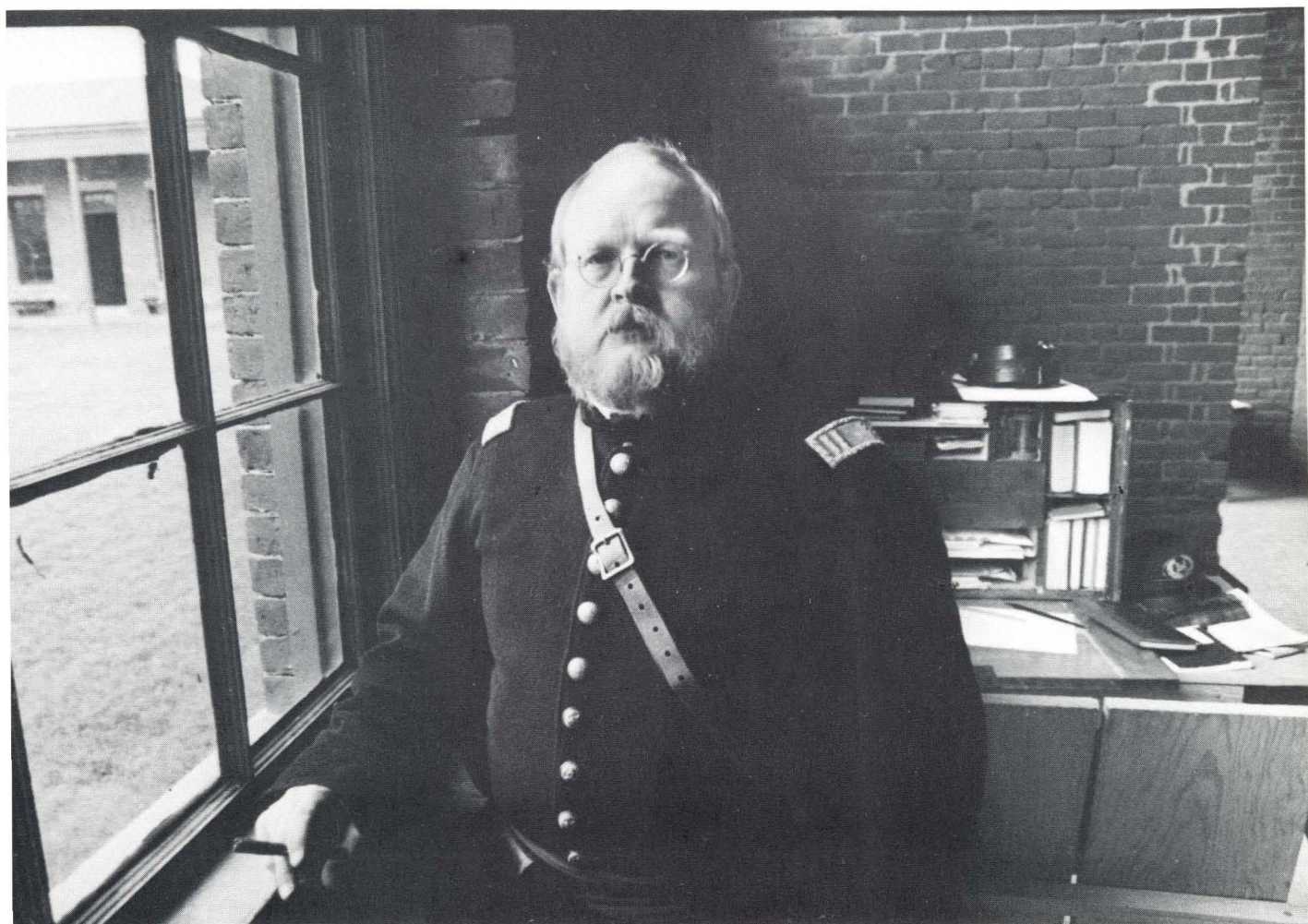
## UNTITLED

Any will to listen lessens each moment  
That I breathe...  
This air that binds to break the accord,  
To crush the desire to force you to  
Understand and unreliably accept, perhaps,  
Me?

The wish dissipates and my heart sinks to  
Crush the hope that rots within me...I am  
Forever lost in the creativity of my solitude-  
Within those arms of fairness-that lied, that  
Deceived, that pushed both my love and my hate  
Away from the one heart that chose to understand-  
A lie.

-- *Saunya Rogers*

*George S. Horsford III*  
*Sepia Photo*  
*11" x 14"*







*Michael DeHoog*

*Black & White Photo 8x10*



# Sometimes Life Really Sucks

-- Jeanne Matthews

**N**aw, I'm not goin'. I know it's homecoming, but I haven't got a date an' it's too late to ask somebody. They'll just hafta crown the queen without me. Cindy? Yeah, right. She dumped me last week. Two years we been goin' out and she dumped me. I thought the King and Queen thing was real important to her, but I guess not. Yeah, you'd think she mighta waited till Christmas break at least.

But no, a little fight an' she's gone. Threw my class ring out the car window, too. Took me all the next morning to find it in the ditch. Mom was gonna kill me if I didn't find it.

So the thing is, it's over and here I am at homecoming with no date and Carol saying that I'm gonna be voted king. I really don't wanna go. Yeah, I got the tux ordered. Shit, it's stupid to go alone. Everybody thinks we're a couple, like I can't even show up without someone asking where is Cindy. Like she was velcroed

onto my clothes or something. I really can't believe she walked out on me now.

The fight? Shit, we always fight. Remember that time she pushed me in the pool at Jim's party? We were fightin' then. Seems like we were always fightin', or makin' up. Boy, could she make up. Still, maybe all that fightin' was a sign an' I just wasn't payin' attention. I guess she wasn't the one for me after all, even though I sure thought so lately.

Yeah, lately we were really close. My parents and her parents even had Thanksgiving together, an' her Dad let me drive his Z on the Sunday after. Seems like we were gettin' to be one big happy family until this happened. I dunno, women, they sure can be weird. One day you're in their life an' the next day you're out.

I remember when I gave her that ring, God, the way she grinned. I guess I felt like I was a king when she took it, an' I can't tell you how I felt the first



time we did it. Geez. Something you wanted all your life, an' there it was, this girl and you could do anything you wanted, shit, I never could believe my luck. I didn't even want her to talk to another guy after that, knowin' what I knew an' wantin' her like I did. I really can't believe it's over. I wonder if there's any chance she might change her mind.

No, you're right, she needs to learn a lesson, no sense in me bein' the one to give in. Life is changin' for me anyway, with the scholarship and all. D'you see the babes on the cheerleading squad at State last week? Yeah, that's the kinda thing I'm lookin' forward to in the spring. Early admission, early choice, I say.

**A**lright, so it was a pretty bad fight. I wasn't gonna tell anybody, but I guess you'll be able to see it pretty soon so what the hell. Ya see, the thing is she's pregnant. Shit, I

couldn't believe my ears, I freaked an' told her to get an abortion. She didn't like that at all, said I was givin' her the wrong answer an' didn't I want to try again. When I told her how did I know it was mine, well, that was when she threw the ring.

No kidding, she walked home, wouldn't talk, hasn't talked to me since. Yesterday I got a box in the mail with everything I ever gave her in it. She's crazy. She sent me every damn withered corsage I ever bought her, and the stuffed animals, ticket stubbs, pictures, everything.

Heartless bitch. I took it all out behind the garage and burned it, except the stuffed animals—too much good money there. I gave those to Sally. She's only six an' don't care who had those animals first.

So here it is, homecoming an' I got a tuxedo an' I'm a King candidate an' I got no date. Sometimes life really sucks.

## I. Young Becoming

Blurring, pearling, in lumps the flesh flows  
pools in the hollow of the bone  
twists into haunted shadows of a life  
and slowly takes the form of pinions.  
Bone breaks, walks end over end  
over and under and wiggling through the ribs  
they reform and know an airy form  
that spreads its winged vengeance,  
mercy left in twain.

The kraftlust builds and beats against his breast,  
carrying him into the cold north.

## II. To: Yourself

Re: Success

6 Awake the shower  
6:15 Eat the news  
6:30 The work drive...,  
7:30 Office talking politics, building  
building, building  
5 Drive home  
6 Laugh at the T.V.  
9 Sleep

## III. Older Interlude

The world must stay in my house  
when the lights go out and...  
I can't see without my glasses, you know-  
When there is darkness at night I can find my way because...  
I know.  
That bird, bird, Hey little bird,  
You sing real nice tonight. Real nice  
Hey, you c'mere and sing for me?

-- John Baxter





Mark Henry

Black & White Photo

8" x 10"





*Georgia Lee Kahler*

## The Peace of Death

After many months of my father's suffering I wanted his death to arrive almost as much as he did. The final days of his life were both painful and triumphant. My family felt a sense of loss and an acquisition of freedom from the illness that had destroyed my father's ability to live life to its fullest potential. The death of someone you love can sometimes provide a sense of peace.

The last six months my father lived required the affection of a mother and the tolerance of a saint. As soon as one problem was rectified, another came along to take its place.

One of the first things to go was my father-daughter relationship, at least in the accustomed context. All of my life I had known him as my guardian angel. The man who would swoop down and rescue me from the shadows in my life. Slowly, the tables turned, and he became dependent on me. The transition might have gone more smoothly, but he fought giving up his command almost as much as I resisted accepting the challenge.

I felt resentment...What gave him the right to stop being my pillar of strength, my soothing waters? But reality took over, and I acquired the energy necessary to take the control that he would miss so much. All of a sudden the roles were reversed, and I was pulling the tow rope, and he was dragging his heels in protest to my decisions and authority. I had to live with the knowledge that my man of steel was slowly melting before my eyes, and no amount of cold air could halt the process.

The same man who fathered five children with patience and fire could not sit with his two granddaughters more than five minutes before snapping at them like a defensive gopher turtle.

I realized that somewhere in all of

that pain was the resentment of his fate. But just as quickly, he turned that resentment into determination. Each day became so full that if it were his last he would not regret it.

His simplistic lifestyle became a challenge that only the best could master. His sense of pride was the one thing his illness could not take away; so he latched onto it with the grip and strength of a drowning man.

On the day my father died, he acquired his sense of peace. By then the pain had become so great that he slipped in and out of reality to avoid whatever he could. The effort that it took to breathe became so much that he labored very slowly. After his warm sponge bath, he smiled a word of thanks and peacefully went to sleep. When he kissed this life good-bye, he left behind all the pain and suffering in his tired and swollen body.

His look of contentment and peace mirrored my feelings of serenity.

The sense of sorrow that I expected had been replaced by a prayer of thanks. No more nights of pain and sorrow, no more jumping in fear when the phone rang, dreading the forthcoming news of his death. No more guilt over the avoidance of going home except when necessary and escaping again as soon as possible to avoid the sight of the shriveled old man who used to be my big strong Daddy.

Finally I gained the ability to feel beyond my sense of loss. I found myself reaching for and acquiring an inner glow that held all the memories of the joy my father brought me.

The many days to come would find me unlocking the doors of laughter, and the punch lines of my father's stupid jokes would come back to haunt me with a sense of peace.



Joann Crosan  
Pastel  
10" x 13"



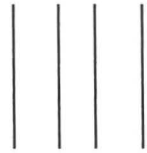
Lisa Manchester  
Computer Graphics  
2 3/4 " x 3 3/4"



## MARKERS

GREY PLACECARDS  
WEATHER WORN  
TELL OF SAD GATHERINGS  
THAT LEAVE BEHIND  
ONE  
OR TWO

-- Ann Williams



Chuck Adams

# THE JOURNEY

## Episode 1: The Stranger

He was 22 years of age and hungry for that one big break that turns a mediocre, barroom musician into a rising rock star. It was December 31st in the year of 2150. Rick Van Slade, talented guitar player, was stuck playing another New Year's Eve gig at the local Holiday Inn. He had struggled for the past six years of his life trying to make the big time and still maintain his artistic integrity. During the break he walked to the lobby to get himself a pack of smokes from the vending machine. "Might as well sell out and go commercial. It's the only way I'll ever make a dime in this lousy business," Rick thought to himself.

It was then that he noticed a strange character standing in the shadows of one of the long hallways that led to the guest rooms. The stranger staring at him was dressed in late twentieth century regalia, an unusual character to be sure. It was as if the stranger had been waiting for him. "Thinking of sellin' out, eh?" the stranger inquired. Rick strained to see the stranger's face in the dimly lit hallway. A feeling of familiarity came to him. "Yeah Rick, that's right. It's me, Chuck Adams. This is your big break, your chance to avoid making that one mistake you'll regret for the rest of your career. Let's go. We don't have time to waste." The stranger turned and started down the long hallway. Chuck Adams had been a small time musician from the late twentieth century. His career never amounted to much, but Rick was familiar with him through his work with a small cult band, QME, and some obscure songwriting for a band known only as The Fabulous Fightin' Brothers. "Is this a dream?" Rick thought to himself. "Not likely," came the reply without so much as a glance back. It was time to move on.



## Episode 2: The Noodlers

Rick followed Chuck down the hall to a doorway. It was like the entrance to any other hotel room. Number "8" was on the door. Chuck opened the door. The door revealed not a room, but a long descending staircase. "What is this place?" Rick asked. "It is the world that you can avoid by making the correct career decisions," Chuck replied. "This is the Musical Underground, a world that contains the lost souls of musicians, singers, and entertainers of the past. The lessons you learn here may serve you well in the world above." They walked for a short while. The stairway reminded Rick of an entrance to a nightclub, tucked away under some building, in a seamy part of town.

Eventually, the staircase opened into a vast world. It was a huge network of bedrooms, private studios, and warehouses. Above the rooms were interconnecting catwalks which allow an overhead view of each room.

Each room contained the soul of a singer or musician. Each soul was diligently practicing his or her craft, but only chaotic notes and noise emerged from their lips and instruments, nothing resembling music. These were the souls of those who had wasted their talents by laziness and failure to practice. Their fate was to spend eternity practicing, never realizing the dreams of success they had in the world above. It was here, Rick learned, that his guide, Chuck, was doomed to spend his time as an eternal noodler. It was time to move on.

## Episode 3: The Frivolous

Rick and his guide moved down the catwalk and through a corridor which led to a large playground. The playground, filled with children, brought a twinge of recognition from Rick, but he couldn't positively identify any of those present. One girl came up to him and asked if he wished to join in the game. Chuck identified her as Leslie Gore, a 1960's pop singer. Her silly and childish tunes had condemned her, along with the other souls, to an eternity of infantile and witless song and dance, an appropriate punishment for the frivolous music they had propagated during their careers above.

It was as they were leaving that Rick noticed Tiny Tim, another waste of musical talent from the late 1960's, in the playground. The other children were belittling him, kicking him, and calling him "fag." "Hmmm, just so," thought Rick to himself. It was time to move on.

Sherry L. Moore  
Colored Pencils  
12" x 12"



Shelley Duncan  
Watercolor  
18" x 24"







*Jillann Savoie  
Size and Medium  
unavailable*

*Louise LaPeters  
Computer Graphics  
3" x 5"*



## Episode 4: The Exploiters

Rick and Chuck departed the playground and entered into a building that resembled a network of lobbies, offices, and elevators. These were the souls of the exploiters. They had prostituted music for money. Here Rick found the unscrupulous music producers and promoters of the centuries. Their final punishment was to have their senses lulled to a dullness by the repetitive playing of muzak versions of the tunes they had written, performed, or produced. Rick was startled as Michael Jackson ran by, trying to escape the mundane elevator version of his single, "Beat It." Giant speakers thundered his once popular hit. His punishment seemed lenient compared to his heinous crime of licensing the Beatles' song, "Revolution," for use in a Nike sneaker commercial.

As they traveled through the world of the musical leeches, the thunderous muzak increased in intensity. It reached a zenith in the realm of Fab Morvan and Rob Pilatus, the infamous Milli Vanilli twins. Their scheme to defraud the listening public of the late 1980's by passing themselves off as talented singers had earned them their just rewards in the hall of the exploiters. Rick casually bumped-up the volume control as he passed. He was eager to escape the monotonous droning of the music. It was time to move on.

## Episode 5: The Fallen Heroes

After leaving the dreaded hall of muzak, Rick and Chuck continued their journey through the Musical Underground. They came upon a great amphitheater. Upon the stage were some of the greatest musicians and singers of the last century. The music echoing forth from the stage was some of the best Rick had ever heard, live or recorded. Here was Jimi Hendrix, perhaps the greatest electric guitarist of the last century. Billie Holiday, the fabulous jazz singer of the 1940's and 1950's was here. Her voice as strong as when she was in her prime. Even the sullen Nick Drake, The talented folk musician, whose life ended when he committed suicide in 1969, was in the band. Of course, the king, Elvis Presley, was wailing out a version of "Blue Suede Shoes."

Despite the experience of playing in the greatest band ever assembled, all the performers looked disheartened. Chuck explained that the performers were allowed to play and sing, but were never allowed to hear their own voices or instruments. It was their penance for ending their careers short, either by suicide or substance abuse. Rick felt pity for those on stage, and would have stayed longer to savor the moment had not Chuck reminded him of the urgency of his journey. Rick realized the great waste of talent of which the world was deprived, and vowed that he would never fall prey to the same pitfalls. It was time to move on.



## Episode 6: The Censors, Destroyers of Works, and Satan

Rick and Chuck came upon a great cathedral which they entered through a massive iron doorway. Once inside, they encountered a great mass of people, all wandering about aimlessly with their tongues and hands tied. Their faces were ashen and ghostlike. They bore no facial expressions. These were the censors of music and song. In the world above, they edited and criticized the musical expressions of others. Their narrow mindedness dictated their own punishment: they loitered about deprived of their own means of expressing their own thoughts and feelings.

Beyond these souls was a plethora of heads, the embodiment of those souls which through the ages had destroyed the writings and recording of musicians to satisfy their own twisted ideas of morality. At the front of the cathedral sat Satan himself. Their malicious souls were condemned to eternal silence, a silence so heavy it began to unnerve Rick. It was time to move on.

## "Epilogue"

---

Rick and Chuck struggled passed the masses to reach a staircase which spiraled back towards the world of the living. As they climbed the staircase, Rick realized that fame and fortune shouldn't be the lofty goals of a musician. By selling out his musical integrity he would never reach the worthy goal of free and eclectic musical expression. He was better off pursuing his own musical goals and following his conscience than selling out to the world of commercialism. As he ascended the staircase, he found himself back in the lobby of the Holiday Inn. His guide was nowhere to be seen. Perhaps it had been a dream. Maybe his mind had been out to lunch. He lit a cigarette and headed back to the stage for the final set. He still had a lot of dues to pay on his way to the top. It was time to move on.

## SKY BALLOON

TODAY  
THE BLUE  
BALLOON OF SKY  
IS NETTED OVER WITH  
WHITE,  
WIND FRINGED ROPES;  
AND WE,  
ON OUR GREEN GONDOLA,  
TRAIL BENEATH  
ON THIS SUNNY  
ETERNITY OF  
A DAY.

-- Ann Williams



Janis Harrison  
Marker Pens  
8" x 14"





Amy Dankert  
Computer Graphics  
5" x 7 "

YOU

Taints his pleasure to speak,  
To crash madness against his face,  
And remember the solid balance his  
Countenance denies....  
To pull together the memories and  
creations he recalls that never did  
once occur,  
He refers to as intelligence and feels  
Always as pain.

---Saunya Rogers

## AN INDIAN'S TEAR

MANY YEARS INTO THE PAST OUR LAND WAS CLEAN AND CLEAR  
ONLY FRAGRANT EVERGREEN AND PATHS TREAD ON BY DEER;  
FRESH WATER RAN THE PUREST DOWN MOTHER NATURE'S STREAMS  
FOR THE INDIAN LIVED ON SIMPLE SKILL AND TRUE ROMANTIC DREAMS.

HE RODE THE HILLS BY DAY ON STEED AND KILLED ONLY TO SURVIVE,  
WORSHIPPED GOD THROUGH SUN AND MOON TO KEEP HIS RULE ALIVE;  
TODAY WITHIN THE PRESENT OUR LAND IS TARNISHED AND SOILED,  
GARBAGE LIES ALONG THE ROADS WHERE ONCE THE RED MAN TOILED.

POLLUTION, SLUDGE AND QUAGMIRE FILL OUR ONCE-FRESH LAKES AND STREAMS  
STILL THE INDIAN LIVED ON SIMPLE SKILL AND TRUE ROMANTIC DREAMS;  
LET US STOP AND THINK OF WHY HE KEPT AND HELD HIS COUNTRY DEAR  
AND OUR HEARTS WILL KNOW THE REASON FOR THE WOEFUL INDIAN'S TEAR.

--- Margaret Reid

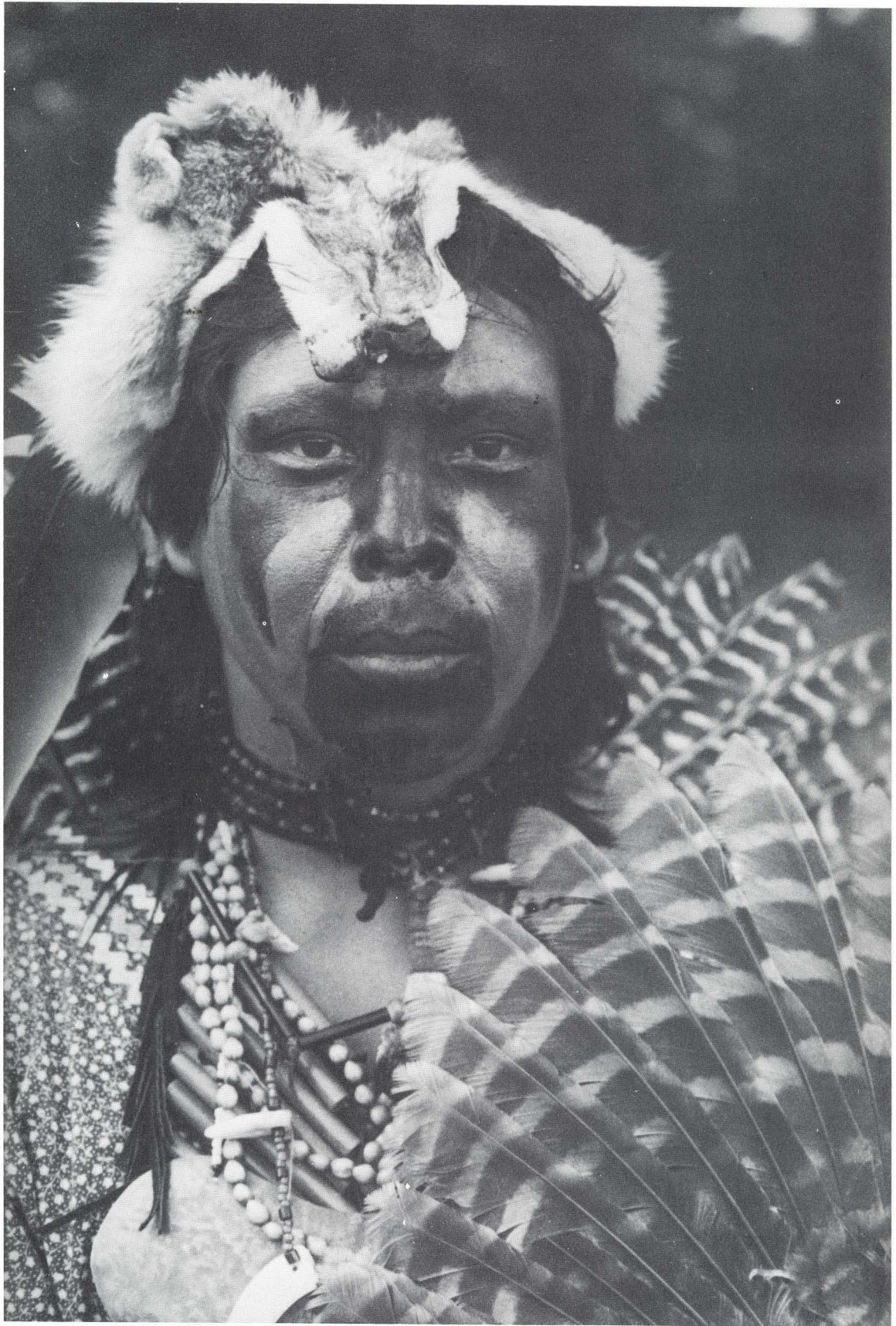


Cynthia Potaczala

Pencil

18" x 24"



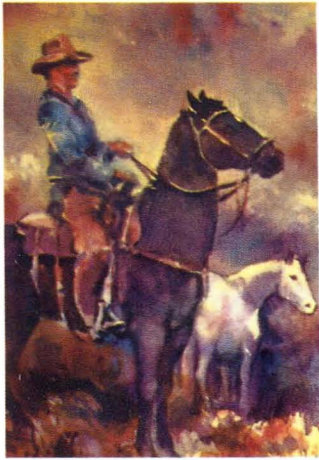


*George S. Horsford*

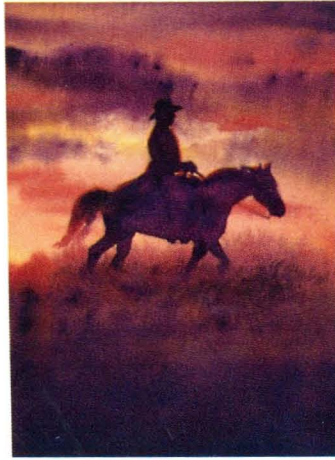
*Sepia Photo*

*8" x 10*

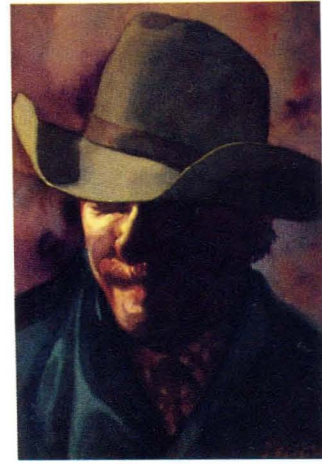




*Ed Velicka*



*Watercolor*



*Dimensions Not Available*

## Voiceless

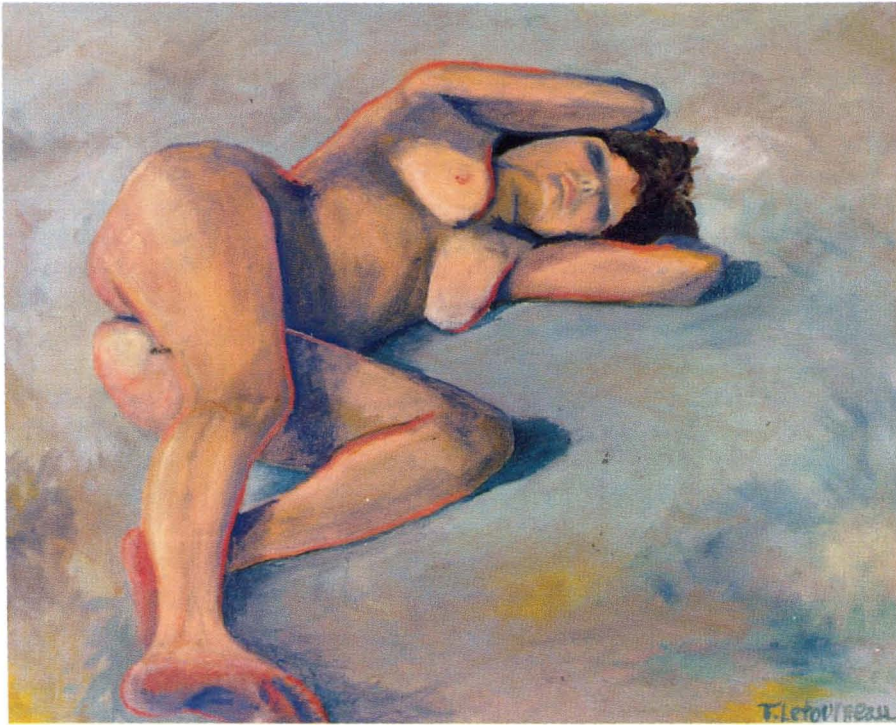
Your eyes, seldom sightless, pierce the  
 very doorway that cages my soul, my secrets,  
 that are caught up in ignorance, in self-satisfying  
 pity of a glorified, exemplified nature.  
 Your soul has hands that reach out to grasp  
 these closed eyes, to gently pull kindness  
 from inadequacy...to turn this deepened fear  
 of mice into a love for a friend no one could  
 ever grasp or give justice to.  
 You make my words bleed, you pull from them the  
 very fiber of my meaning, crush those empty shells,  
 hold them out to me and smile...It wipes out  
 perception of needful things-  
 Mutilates heart-felt romance and chaos-twists  
 its purpose to define this scope...Do you feel  
 This?  
 Dying for your change of mind-  
 Arms outstretched for that glorified embrace?  
 And what is the rest in store for me?

--- Saunya Rogers

*Larry Laferriere*  
*Watercolor*  
 9" x 11"





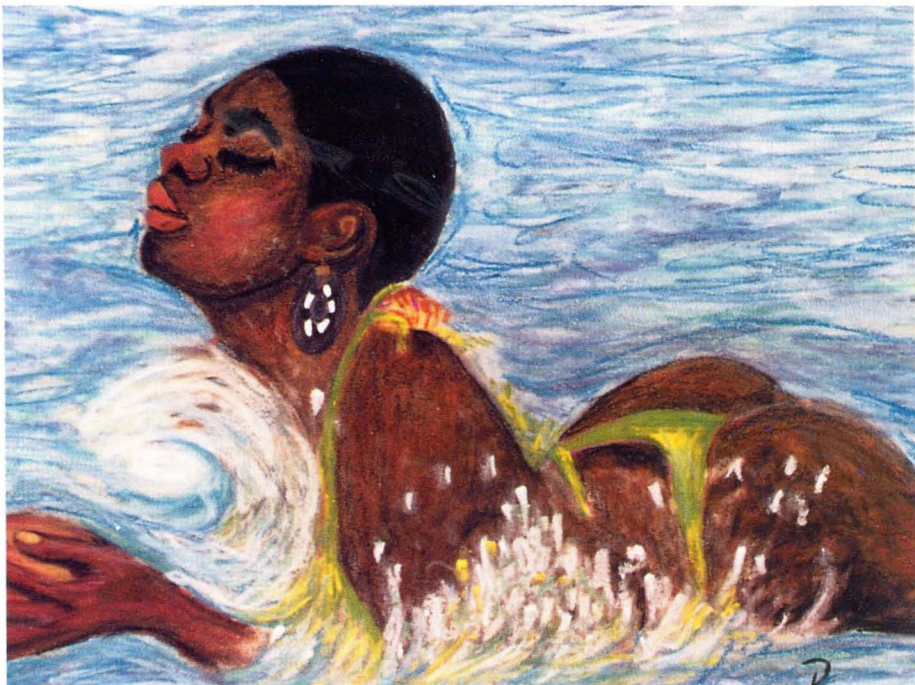


*Thomas Letourneau*

*Oil on Canvas 16" x 20"*

*Paul Faust*

*Pastel 11" x 14"*



throat at the thought of a icy cold hand reaching out of the dark to grab him. He flung his door open. Stumbling inside he reached back to close it, to close out the terror. Stepping forward to find the lamp he felt something stab him in the lower abdomen. He panicked, reaching out to fend off whatever was attacking him out of the darkness. He felt the cool, smooth surface in his hand and his panic stopped. He had walked into the statue of a unicorn, the one he had given to his now deceased wife of thirty years on her thirty-second birthday. He had walked into the horn.

Two hours later after a hot shower and warm meal he was relaxing in his Lazyboy, intently watching the evening news. His interest was in a story about a hit

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# FOOTSTEPS

MARK HENRY

He was walking, listening, with his breath caught in his throat. His heart was pounding in his chest, the cold December air searing in his lungs. He was listening, listening for the terror that had followed him every night for a week.

"That little bitch!" He whined to himself. When he did so the wind suddenly picked up, howling through the trees with a maelstrom of fury. And she came. He could hear her, running up the street behind him, coming closer. Fear gripped him and his heart began to beat, faster and faster, almost as fast as the child's footsteps coming up the street at him. Panic caught him in its icy grip and he ran. It was only two blocks to his small dilapidated house. The street light cast harsh shadows through the trees onto the cement ahead of him. Still he ran, the footsteps of the child always just behind, never quite catching up but never falling away. He didn't turn to look for fear of the dreadful visage that he knew must be there—the child. His dark house loomed before him. He fumbled with his keys, dropping loose change. He stabbed at the lock, but it was the wrong key. Fear welled in his

and run accident several days earlier. An eight year old girl had been killed by an unknown driver. The driver was being sought but there were few clues as the girl had been at home alone. The story ended with "If you have any knowledge that might help, please call your local police." That was a laugh, he thought. Did he know who did it? Oh yeah, he knew alright. He rubbed a meaty palm over his brow then grabbed the television remote and hit the off button. Leaning back in his recliner, he looked perfectly relaxed but a slight trembling of his hand as he put the remote down betrayed him.

The dream started, flickeringly at first but picking up clarity and realism as it played out. He was in his car driving home from his after work visit to the local "working man's" hangout, a dark, greasy place with topless dancers who would make better money picking up aluminum cans. It was hot, and the afternoon sunlight formed a red glare across his windshield. Driving through a neighborhood two miles from his house he started watching for a particular house on the right. It was at this house that



a little girl lived who, almost everyday, hid behind the cars parked on the street and yelled obscenities or threw an assortment of objects at his car. Two days earlier a plastic bag of dog feces had splattered off his windshield, and when he had gotten out to remove it the girl tauntingly stood in her doorway and called him a motherhumper. Well, not exactly, but even HE didn't use language like that! He had climbed back into his car and sped away red faced with anger and embarrassment. "How dare she!" he snapped, ineffectually hitting his horn button. Now he was watching for her in hopes of catching her or her parents. The one thing that almost always alerted him and sometimes pissed him off was those stupid little girl's shoes she wore. They were the white ones with the hard plastic bottoms, they always clattered as she ran on the driveway either towards his car to attack him or away to escape-clack, clack, CLACK!

Suddenly, an egg exploded on his left side window and he heard the clack of her shoes as she ran. Involuntarily he stepped on the gas pedal, and the car leapt forward. Mixed in with the sound of his engine roaring, tires squealing of tires was the clacking of her shoes, clack, clack, cla-wump! His car shuddered as he drove over something soft. Looking in his rearview mirror, he had a hard time comprehending what he was seeing, a shapeless mass lying in the road. His first thought was that she must have been playing another prank. Then he saw those white shoes and realized she had been on the opposite side today. She had run right out in front of him, THAT WAS HER! He tossed in his sleep, that dream swirled and reformed. He was walking. It was dark, but ahead he could see a street light. Suddenly he felt cold, and then he could hear footsteps. She was coming. He tried to walk faster but everything moved by slowly. He had to make it to the light. It would be safe there. He walked, moving towards the light, but she came faster, running. He was less than ten feet when she caught him. A paralyzing cold hand reached out of the darkness and spun him around and she stood there—no, she FLOATED over the ground, up and down, up and down slowly in front of him. Her face

was a hideous caricature of the beautiful blue-eyed, dark haired girl she had once been. One side of her face was shredded, and some teeth were missing as if she had been dragged for several feet. Both of her eyes were swollen and bulging from their sockets, all blue and red, and a putrid scent rose to greet his nostrils making him gag. Then she reached out towards him, her arm dangling with a broken bone and out of the dark chasm of her mouth she said "Was I so bad? Did I deserve to die? Why didn't you stop?" The cold lifeless word flowed from her mouth. She moved closer. "You'll pay mister." She said. "You'll rot in hell for killing me, an' I'll be right there, right there with ya' forever and ever!" She grinned, showing more of her torn mouth. Then she started floating up and down a little faster, her broken arms flapping crazily at her sides. "Forever and ever, mister, forever and ever and ever and ever...."

He awoke with a scream trapped somewhere in his head. At first he thought it was him but realized in a few moments that his alarm clock was going off. He felt like he hadn't slept at all and didn't remember walking to his bed during the night. He got up and got ready to face another day. He made a small breakfast of some cold cereal and an orange. He went and turned on the television and listened for any forthcoming news about the accident. Nothing. He had stopped driving his car just in case, and was now riding the bus to work. It was only a couple of days after he had started riding that he heard the footsteps, those damn hard soled shoes! At first he thought he just had the jitters. The sound always stayed away in the distance, until one windy night when the footsteps rushed at him out of the darkness and a bony, icy hand clutched at him from behind, sending him fleeing in sheer panic to his home. Now he was a true believer.

He worked in an aluminum can pressing factory. He basically stood in one spot all day and watched to see if the machinery started pressing out cans without tops or bottoms or whatever. He worked until five P.M. then had almost a two hour bus ride to get home, getting him there well after dark. It was this part footsteps. It was eight o'clock at night before he got off of



Ed Velicka  
Watercolor  
Dimensions not available





Ronald J. Potaczala  
Black & White Photo  
8"x10"

the bus to walk four blocks to his house. There had been a series of heavy thunderstorms all day, and the bus service was slow. Two blocks from his house goose bumps formed all over his body, and they weren't from the chill wind that blew in the trees. The wind was whistling wildly. The trees whipped into a frenzy, and lightning played across the sky. The wind stopped and nothing moved. Then just as suddenly a sharp crack of thunder boomed through the streets making him jump as if shocked. To his disbelief and sheer terror the lights along the street went out. The wind whipped up again, and through the sound of blowing leaves he could hear her footsteps, coming towards him, and she was SKIPPING!! He turned and ran for his life. He could hear her coming, so much faster than ever before. Then, he could hear a banshee shrieking and a small voice whispering over and over-

"ForeverandeverandeverandeverANDEVER..."

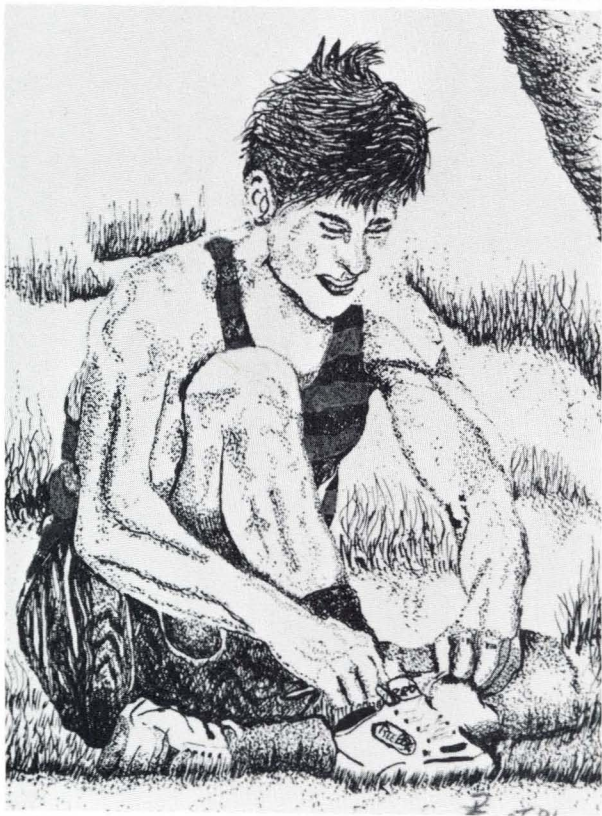
It was building to a chorus of shrieking echos, and he felt that his mind would unravel and split like a weather-beaten softball. Then he ran. And still she came. Clack, clack, clackclackCLACK! He hit his front door with a dull thud. Fumbling he dropped his keys and with a strength born only through sheer terror, he lunged against the door once, then twice. The door handle gave a sigh. Then the frame cracked then shredded, the handle giving way. He stumbled to one knee then burst into his living room-safe at last!

The following morning Deborah and Jack Higgins were driving by. They were an elderly couple that lived up the street. Jack wanted to see if everything was alright after that major storm the night before. There had been a reported tornado, and there were blackouts all over the city. When the couple pulled up, Jack could see a figure in the doorway that was kneeling. He could

also see that the door was hanging off of its frame. "Stay here Deb, while I go see if everything's Okee-dokee." Jack walked up to the door. The man was hunched over a few feet inside by a statue of a horse or something. "Mister, you O.K.?" The man didn't answer. Jack touched the man's shoulder. It was cold. He gave the man a gentle push, and he fell over like a sack of flour. Jack looked down and realized the man wasn't going to answer. It had to be the damndest thing Jack had ever seen. The man, while stumbling around in the dark, had managed to somehow impale himself on the statue of a unicorn right there in his own front door. The look on the man's face was really weird too, like he'd seen a ghost.

After the police had come and asked their questions, they allowed Jack to go. The police, while searching the house for clues had found a piece of clothing in the grill of the man's car that matched the description of a hit and run victim some weeks earlier. There would be an investigation. Jack left the house and started towards his car. A breeze picked up whistling through the trees. Every now and then a branch would clatter on a roof up and down the street. To Jack it reminded him of the sounds of children running on cement, sort of a clack, clack type of sound. Jack got into his car. He was thinking about one other strange thing found at the man's house. The man's wife was dead, and there were no indications of his having children or young ones around. Then why were there a pair of little girl's shoes that still had wet grass and mud on them sitting inside the front door? He cranked the car engine and heard the tree branches clacking off the roof again. He thought to himself "You know, I bet those pretty, white, little girl's shoes would sound just like them there branches sort of clack, clack like.





Paul Faust  
Pen and Ink



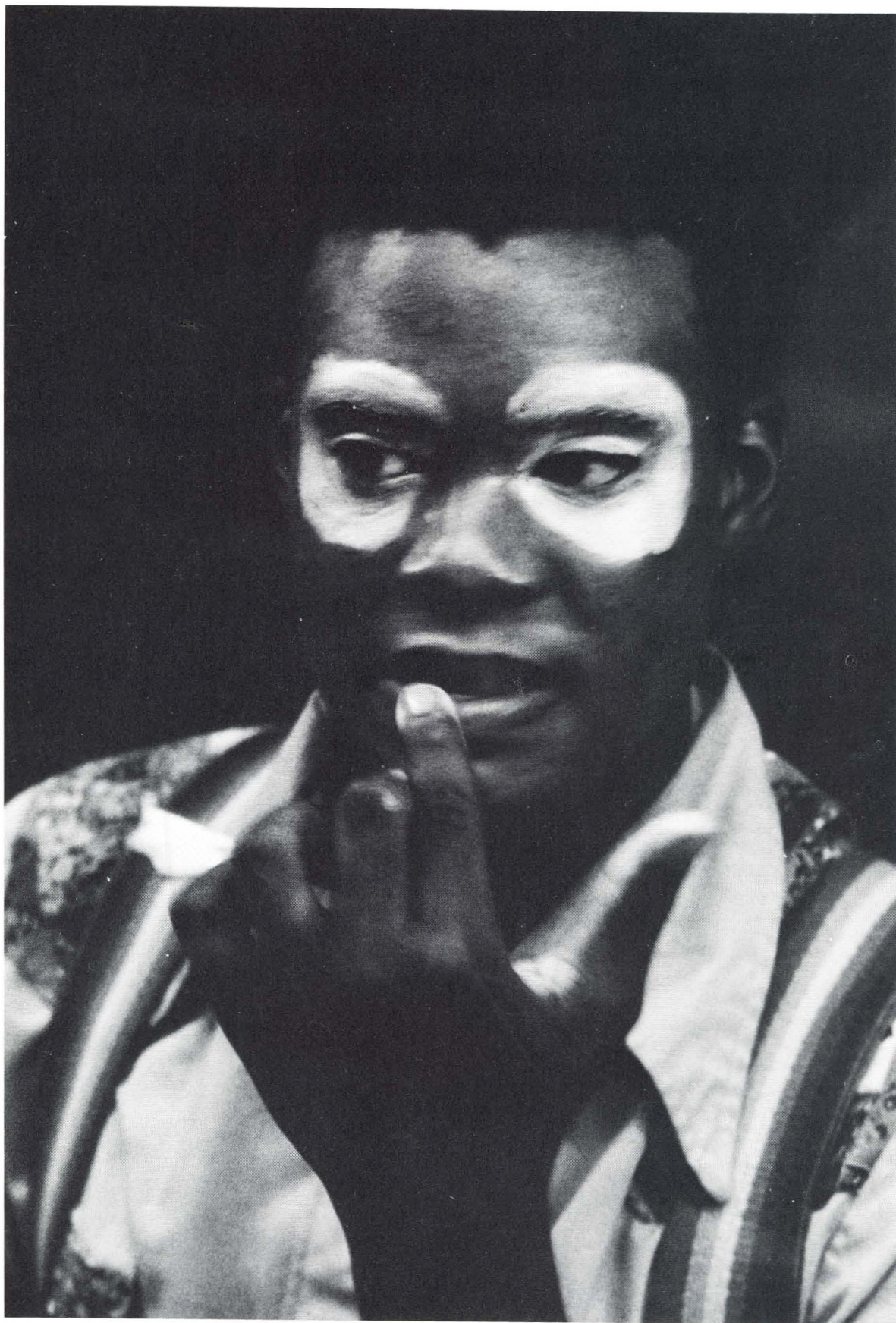
OIL AND WATER

Pleasure	Pain	Aren't they the same?
Love	Hate	Will they ever wait
You	Me	to be free?
Black	White	What race is right?
Here	There	Don't come too near
You	I	must soon decide.
YES	NO	maybe

Stop!  
Oil and Water

--- Gillian Bernard





*Cynthia Potoczala*

*Black & White Photo*

*8" x 10 "*



## SILENT BRANCHES

Supporting virgin snow  
    in winter's depth  
awaiting strength of sunny days  
    to ease the burden.  
Dancing with the wind—  
    now barren, soon to blossom;  
serving as leather footstools  
    for robin and their kin.  
Laden in summer with  
    feathered castles,  
full of hungry chirps;  
sustaining life for a time—  
    an endless cycle of death-  
        renewal-  
waiting speechless,  
silent branches.

--- Margaret Reid



Craig Henderson

Pencil

Dimensions not Available



Mark Henry  
Pencil  
14 1/2" x 18"



Larry Laferriere  
Pen and Ink  
11" x 8"



# Prologue

by Mark Henry

The helicopter skimmed low over the trees, casting a stark dragonfly-like shadow as it went by. The door gunner watched for signs of life, other than animals or vegetation. He had the M-60 machine gun nestled against his shoulder, he could feel the warm downdraft of the helicopter's blades against his face. He watched as leaves and small twigs were sucked out of the tops of the fir trees. Standing to his left, strapped in with a nylon safety harness, was the leader of the three-man recon team. The man was big, standing a good six-foot eight and weighing in at two-eighty, none of it fat. The man carried a Ruger mini-14 assault rifle, not military issue but it spat out the same 5.56 mm ammo that the U.S. made M-16 did. The M-16 is what the "Modern American Fighting Man" carried, when there used to be a modern America. Of course, "Modern America" had ceased to exist some six years before...along with the rest of the world.

The big man reached around and dug his underwear out of his crack where it had bunched up, never taking his eyes off the mountain below. The door gunner almost cracked up at the sight of the giant man picking his ass but thought better; the giant was one of the good guys, but he was also meaner than a cornered and pissed off mountain lion. The gunner didn't want to have to have the M-60 surgically removed from HIS own rear turbine! The big man suddenly reached up and pressed the mike button on his helmet, the frequency opened to everyone in the 'copter.

"I got movement." He growled. "pilot, take us around 2.03 north by north-east, 1/2 klik and go up to 400 feet while I take a look." The 'copter rose and banked, the tenseness on board was almost tangible.

This was the 'copter and crew's final mission before a three day R&R. They had been flying the Recon team all over this end

of Oregon state. The three man team was part of the nationwide effort to eradicate the remaining contaminants from the "Escape" of '91. The team was called the "Eradicators" or sometimes "Pest Control" and in the past week the 'copter crew had seen them effectively eradicate over two hundred contaminants. Not a real pleasant job.

.....  
The contaminants came out of the Soviet Union during the splintering and fall of Communism to, hah-hah, Democracy. The western world had greeted the restructuring of Russia with open arms and a smile. At first there was some worry about who was controlling the massive Soviet arsenal of nuclear weapons. Then came a scare when a group of Red Army hardliners seized a convoy of tactical nuclear weapons being shipped for destruction. But a larger not-so-hardline group of Red Army commando specialists quickly and efficiently solved that problem, Thank you so much and all. What people overlooked were the many bases that dealt with BIOLOGICAL weapons, not the ones having to do with loading mutated anthrax into ICBM's but the ones or namely the one dealing with gene splicing or rather screwing around with Mother Nature. They found that she was a very protective and jealous mother — pun intended. Whatever it was that got loose spread like AIDS in a roman orgy.

The most populated countries of that hemisphere fell first, China, Japan and Russia fell in a week, the Arab nations a week later and so on. Israel did quite well, Their Mossad agents in and around Russia gave plenty of warning-so they simply took to shooting anything outside of the borders that moved. Europe went two weeks after that and Britain, though faring better because of the cold waters and rocky coasts, wasn't far behind.

The contaminants hit South America like a firestorm, those nations having been so underdeveloped they simply had no chance. They rolled northward toward the Tex-Mex and California borders. The United States, having received warnings from the Mossad (A small "Thank You" for all those years of help...) determined that only one



course of action could possibly work. It was quite obvious that the border could not be sealed with sheer manpower, some outbreaks of contamination had occurred in the mainland and the border patrols couldn't even stop the less volatile illegals. So they simply nuked themselves a new more permanent border, from the gulf of Mexico at Taampico to Hermallillo on the Pacific. It was still causing beautiful sunsets. The U.S. and Canada then teamed up to start clearing out contaminants in their borders. That was five years ago.

Drug traffickers and illegals had brought the contaminants into several cities around the states. This included the Big Apple, Houston, L.A., and Montreal. They were simply sealed off and Neutron bombed —this killed everything off, but saved the land and buildings then made things ready for a great real estate rush after ten or twelve years rather than six hundred. For smaller outbreaks or sparsely occupied areas, Eradication teams were set up.

The contaminants were easier to identify at first, since they killed the victim then infested the body, after about a week the body started to deteriorate and were easily seen, if not smelled. Things began to change and somehow they adapted. The bodies stopped rotting away until they were cast off. The contaminants began to grow more intelligent. This made spreading of the species more feasible since now they could blend in. There was more than one person who had sex with his partner only to discover that the partner wasn't who or what he thought. But by then it was too late. The contaminant ingested the brains and nerve core of the victim and it was thought that the heightening in intellect of the bio-organism, might have something to do with this. In later contaminant bodies it was also discovered that they were no longer absorbing the victims' cerebellum or any other of the brain's parts that controlled the bodily functions; therefore, the host body still lived and functioned, only now as a totally new entity. After this discovery they became harder to spot and eliminate. The only way to spot a contam now was to get up close and see how they reacted. Since

the Contams were part of an original single organism, they were all linked psychically and would, therefore, react as one, especially under duress.

.....

The big man hit the ground in a crouch, his two men flanked him. The man to his left was a Mexican-Italian who had a strong Spanish accent. He had come across the Texas border as an illegal immigrant with his family ten years earlier: hence his nickname "Wetback." The man to the big man's right was skinny and short, he stood at only five foot five and weighed in at one hundred and twenty three pounds, a flyweight by most standards. The big man looked at the little dude and grinned, looks can be extremely deceiving. The small man's name had at one time been "Sammy" but at some point during the Contam invasion he had lost his family and most likely his mind. Now he went by the name "Crazy" which fit quite well, all you had to do was see him in action. It was known that he had chewed the throat right out of a Contam during a hand to hand, that was something even the big man couldn't stomach because not only was there danger of infection, but the Contams also had the nasty habit of putrefying as soon as they were killed.

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The three of them moved off towards the cluster of buildings, walking in single file, senses on full. The big man had seen possible indications of Contams, namely there WAS no evidence of human life in or around the mining camp he had spotted. The chopper's blades whirled to a stop. the big man glanced back at the gunner who gave him a thumbs up. The team moved out.

The doorgunner watched as the team walked off and then laughed softly as the big man fingered his underwear out of his butt again. The gunner checked the elastic retaining strap on his M-60 then hit the call button on his radio and told the pilot he had to take a whiz. "Don't take one on a mine..." Radioed the pilot as he clicked off the mike.

.....

The big man walked, studying the mountains around and thinking about the job

ahead. Sweat ran in rivulets down his back. The Contams had gotten pretty damn dangerous over the last couple of years. At first they had trouble adjusting to the environment that they had taken over. Then as they adapted and their understanding grew, they went from running away to standing up and fighting back. The big man had lost several men through close in fighting including one that had the pin of a hand grenade pulled while it was still on his belt — both he and the Contam were turned into a shower of pink confetti.

.....  
They walked into the clearing and stepped onto the main dirt road of the mining camp. There was a line of clapboard shacks down both sides of the road, perhaps ten or twelve in all. The road ended at the head of a two story mine entrance opening into the mountain. The building had two sluices running down to a small stream. The sluices were spring fed and the men could hear water trickling over the boards. Crazy walked over by a building to examine a body lying in the doorway. The body was male. He was lying facedown with a rock pick sticking out of the center of his back. Crazy pushed at the body with his toe. There was a slight give, then the smell of rotting flesh

drifted over him in waves. He grimaced and stepped back, "Sir, we definitely have contamination here...Sir?" He turned. The big man and Wetback's attention was already diverted.

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The two men had walked to the other side of the street to peer into a few other buildings. Wetback heard it first and stopped the big man. They both turned towards the tunnel. Deep within the tunnel they could both hear a humming sound then the echo of stones clattering against the floor could be heard. A group of people walked out of the tunnel. Some were armed with shovels and picks. The first two had firearms. Wetback heard a noise from behind and whirled on his heels. The street was filling with Contams, and the three men were being hemmed in.

The big man had heard Crazy speak and without moving his head he flicked his eyes in that direction. Crazy had just become aware of company and pulled back the pump on his shotgun, when the big man saw several hands reach out of the open doorway and pull him backwards. Crazy screamed and the shotgun went off... "Where the hell did they all come from?" screamed Wetback. For an answer, the big man lifted

his weapon and opened fire.

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The doorgunner was walking back to the chopper. He was invigorated by the mountain air and had seen a variety of wildflowers blooming across the meadow. He was swinging into the chopper and plugging his helmet in when he heard the rattle of automatic weapons in the distance and the much louder "KERWHUMP!!!" of grenades. "Oh, shit!" he yelled and keyed his mike button. "D.G. to pilot, We got live fire in the D.Z., I repeat, live fire in the drop zone, GET US UP!" A shriek of static came over the phones almost deafening him. The helicopter rocked, but the turbines didn't start. He glanced over his shoulder towards the pilot cabin fire door and a scream froze in his throat. A male Contam was crawling through the open door and behind him a nude female was straddling the pilot, at first it looked as if they might be kissing but the wormlike proboscis that had sprouted from the girl's forehead and buried itself in the pilot's showed otherwise. The doorgunner yelled and turned the '60 towards the Contams and opened fire. Every thirty rounds of machine gun ammunition is separated by what is called a "tracer" round, this is a bullet that is coated with



phosphorus which, when fired, glows white hot. These racers allow a gunner to trace where the bullets are going rather than trying to aim, hence the name. The gunner managed to fire off six hundred rounds of ammo of which twenty were tracers of which six went into the tanks holding the petrol.

.....  
The young man sat astride his horse and watched as the helicopter turned into a fireball, sending a column of greasy black smoke skyward. He then watched as the last of the three intruders was overrun. The last man had been an extremely enormous man who had fought like a bear. In the end he had been cornered and had pulled the pins out of six of his hand grenades,

saving the last for himself. He then watched as the dark haired one was caught in one piece and taken back into the tunnels to be changed. Perhaps his knowledge would be of some use, if not his body. The man turned his horse and started on a trail out of the mountains, he had a long trip ahead of him even if he found and could operate a motor vehicle. He then needed to find a representative of the U.S. government because he had a few very important things to tell. How the Contams found a way to use not only the bodies of their victims but their knowledge as well. How the Contams were starting their own centers for furthering the propagation of their species, and most impor-

tantly, that there was no reason to resist because the last human would be found and changed before the year was out. It was already September. The last thing he had to tell was an "Eyes Only" kind of thing, or perhaps ears only or anal only... wherever. First he would tell the President, then the V.P. and they could tell the Cabinet and so on. They would all all become part of the Brotherhood and with their directions the population would follow blindly into the processing centers and the contams would be the world's only superpower. He looked west towards the setting sun, then turned towards the east with the warmth at his back. He had no time to rest, there was so much work to do....

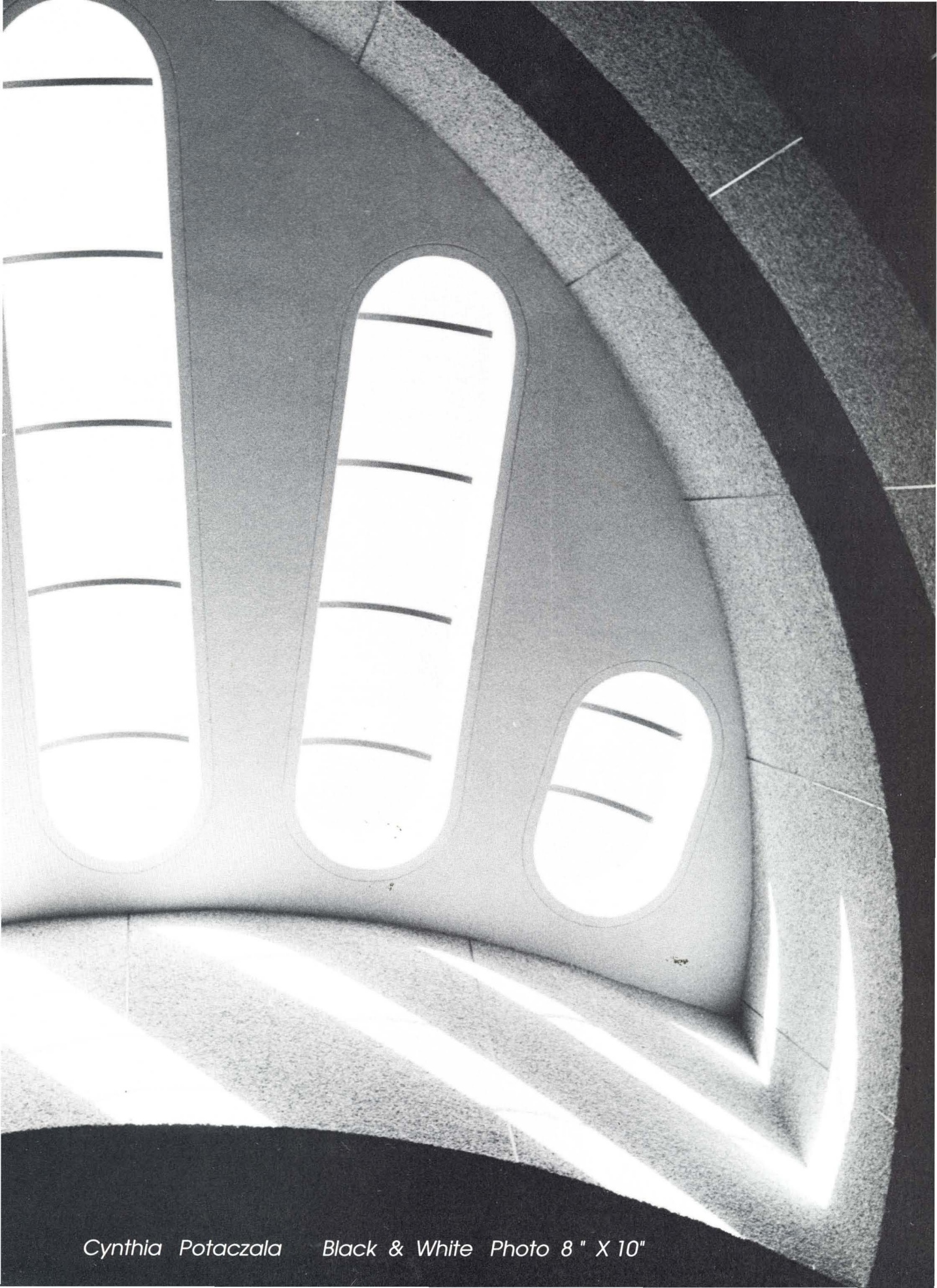


Mark Henry

Black & White Photo

8"x10"





Cynthia Potaczala    Black & White    Photo 8" X 10"





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