

stairway details and window sills section markers Code-related notes

inscape Fall 2002

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F. KEITH WAHLE

The Last Dinosaur in Heaven

It was the day the last dinosaur got into heaven.

It was a day like any other, the day the rivers started to boil
and the bridges fell.

Children were selling scabs in the street.

An old man with a shovel was picking up the severed noses of the
defeated army.

The dogs were marching to another country.

A woman with nervous teeth came back to us, wearing a necklace
appraised at a billion dollars.

A doctor was lying in the street, covered with sadness.

It wasn't enough to say, I'm sorry.

It wasn't enough to say, it will never happen again.

Not good enough just to sit quietly eating one potato under a
crooked moon.

Pajama Danger

All over town, people are having trouble with their pajamas.

One man is eaten by his pajamas.

A woman is murdered by pajamas with a knife.

Children all over the city are being frightened by pajamas.

In some of the sleepier sections of town, restless groups of pajamas are gathering on street corners, breaking out store windows and taunting the police.

The pajama prisons, already overcrowded after last summer's wave of pajama crime are being strained to their limits.

But the police have been placed on 24-hour pajama alert.

The citizens are assured that there is no need for fear.

Most pajamas have remained docile. Only a few troublemakers are responsible for the majority of the violence.

In all likelihood, your own pajamas are perfectly safe.

Do not be afraid to go to sleep.

The Wings of a Nudist

She had the wings of a nudist.

Everywhere she flew, it was like that.

It was pretty much like that, everywhere.

It was like that all over, pretty much.

She had traveled more than a thousand miles without ever putting on any clothes.

Sometimes she would wrap herself in a towel or a sheet, on public transportation, for example.

For example, she had never eaten hot tamales.

She had never voted in a local election.

She had never looked at the sunset through a glass of vodka.

She had the wings of a nudist.

We would sometimes see her in the sky, as naked as a soupbone, paddling through the clouds.

That is how her life passed.

For example, she had never been bitten by a fox.

She had never learned to play the concertina.

That is how her life passed.

It was not a bad way to live.

JOHN GREY

Northerner in the South

I'm in exile
from when I first hear
that all the history is suffering,
that all the lovers are lost.
And people don't live in towns,
they inhabit the banks of something,
and it's not always what you can see.
Sure sometimes it's the bayou,
or the Mississippi,
but it can also be the ghosts
of these things,
cantankerously flowing
or heartbreakingly still
and sometimes flooding
up to the eye-balls.

I'm in exile
after the first cypress,
the first festival
where it's whispered
once they cut out
the creature's bloody heart,
when an old woman
shows me the heirloom
chaffing against her
tree-ring wrinkled neck,
and I spy, off the winding back road,
bars that twinkle from brown water.

I'm in exile
when I plunge my first quarter
into the rusty dark of a jukebox
and nothing but rural routes
and cookstoves and crystal chandeliers
sizzle from crackling speakers,
when I see walls adorned in psalms,
crazy running dogs
and moons on fire.

I'm in exile
when I realize
something precious can be muddy,
or spoken so slowly
it's like the fishing lines

are talking
or the oaks
or the alligator heads of loneliness,
that meander the surface
where the lanterns shed their light.

Shadow Play

The shadow of the bridge seeps into
the shadow of the abandoned factory,
without even a break for sun to defrost
the rust-brown grass between.

The table shadow melts into the
shadow of the refrigerator, the stove.
There is no kitchen floor any more.
These shadows are so long, so wide,
there's more table, refrigerator,
stove at my feet than stands upright.
How late a time it is in the world
when things are more what they're not
than what they are.

The shadow of this house
seeps into the shadow of the woods.
Tree shadow swamps flower shadow
which drowns hummingbird shadow.
Twilight's too lazy to make much difference.

I imagine a great shape of my life,
bodiless and dark, growing away from me,
engulfing everything up unto
the shadow of another's life.
In between is the love they tell me.
They don't realize how easily
the dusk has taken care of that.

RICHARD FEIN

Discovery

He had seen maggots before, a dead dog, a decapitated cat
white bones exposed like a half-peeled rotten banana,
but here a human form was out of place.
He ran out of the weeds to mom.
He wasn't allowed to reenter the weeds,
though the lot was his second home,
and he had seen maggots before.
Dead transient they said.
He didn't know what a transient was, or why it should be dead.
Mom held him close; the police gave him candy.
He overheard,
"Nightmares for life, poor little kid."
He cried, knowing
the louder he cried the more candy he'd get.
He knew maggots, he had seen them before.
They waited for things that fell and couldn't get up.
When mom once talked about grandma flying to heaven,
he imagined maggots below.
And he remembered the spider he once saw floating in air.
He saw a miracle before his eyes,
until the sun betrayed a silken thread
that tied the bug to a branch,
a branch that he could touch or tear.
Nothing flies skyward without rockets, sails, or wings.
He knew this and he knew maggots.
He held his mother tight, and lost his taste for candy.
Later at bedtime,
he asked his mom to read a fairy tale,
so that he could sleep and dream
of last spring when grandma had pushed him on a swing.

Aisle Of Improbabilities

Glimpses of Elvis on Mars,
a two-headed baby baptized twice,
a world of improbabilities reported
by brazen tabloids stacked neck-high
on the checkout aisle racks.
I pass through this world
with a basket full of toilet paper, cookies, and pickles.

Her cheeks are shrouded by her long brown hair.
Her deft, long fingers move the merchandise,
the cost quickly rising as the laser scans.
She pauses and offers me a smile,
revealing a slightly crooked tooth among the pearly whites.
She scolds me with her delicate fingers.
They point to an expiration date.
The cookies are put aside;
she has rescued me from a stale sweetness.
Her graceful fingers get back to business.
Deftly she processes my purchases.
I give her dollars; she gives me change.
Her fingers press my hand
longer than needed to exchange currency.
But the coin is cold with no time for warming.
Our skin must separate,
for the sum has been totaled and paid.
A line of commerce waits behind us.
Her eyes are blue. Her hair is brown.
Her fingers have touched and moved me.
Nearby movie stars cavort on metal racks,
arm and arm at gala events.
But right before me stands,
a long-haired girl with one slightly crooked tooth,
and blue eyes that almost wink at me.
Beyond the glittering Hollywood doings
one more tabloid solemnly proclaims
that aliens from Venus are invading soon.

On Third Thought

There is a mystery in three
greater than the trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
or that Revelation predicts a third of the world will be destroyed.
The triad enigma even haunts our humor
rabbi, priest, and minister,
doctor, accountant, and lawyer,
Englishman, Scotsman, and Irishman,
or any permutation thereof
walk into a bar or are stranded on a desert island.
But if such burlesque threesomes
include a lawyer then the lawyer is last,
for the punch line is always about the third one
and the lawyer is the first you'd like to punch.
As far as those inhabitants of the islands west of Europe,
sometimes you'd like to punch all three.
Of Course, the Marx Brothers and the Stooges
were always known as three,
though the Marx clan numbered five,
and the Stooges were six,
but such is the totem of the power of three.
Even the swashbuckling Musketeers
were a tetrad and not a trio.
By three we pull together in great strength
one, two, three, then heave ho.
The chant never stops at two or goes to four.
After confession or absolution
the harshest command is the third
ready, aim, then fire.
And it's always the third wish
that the genie undo the first two

Hastily granted desires
and return to his lamp.
The symmetry
of left, center, right
beginning, middle, end
problem, decision, resolution
animates all our psyches.
The very logic we use to unravel the puzzle of three
is itself a trilogy of syllogism
major premise, minor premise, conclusion.
Even a letter must be folded into three flaps
to properly fit into an envelope.
This number three is a triptych missive
from the waltzing cadence of the human brain.

STEPHANIE STOBAUGH

Daddy sits in the Kitchen

Daddy sits in the kitchen.
The miracle strength of his shoulders
Hunched and bent forward.
His hair is constant white
Worry streaks.
Silent wisdom;
He won't color it like Mom does.

His hands have always been peculiar—
Mashed, flattened thumbnails that
My sister inherited. His hands shake.
He rubs rosary-beaded fingers
And reflected in the glass-framed Last Supper,
An unforgiving hairline.

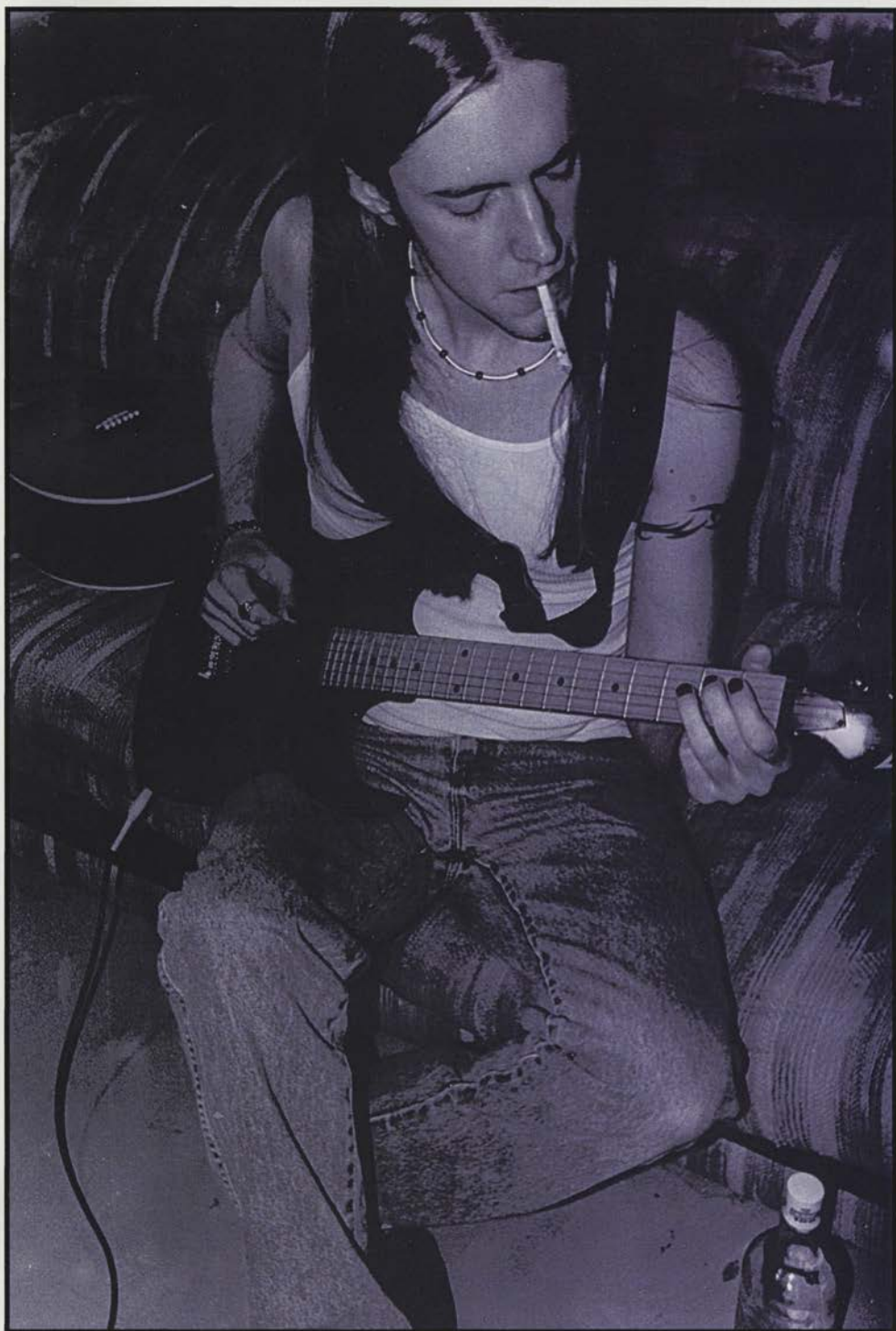
In harder times
His legs wouldn't work.
He walked with a cane.
He was twenty-five. I was six.
I think we watched the same cartoons
And believed in the same things.
It was a long time ago.

He turns on the blue glow of the television.
He says his dumplings are cold and wants
To go to bed early again.
The medicine makes him limp,
Weak like old mimosa trees in our front yard
At our old house
Where he used to mow the grass,
Cared about the shape of things,
Enjoyed sweating into a dishtowel.
Now pills are swallowed, swallowed, swallowed
But the cabinets never have enough and
Daddy sits in the kitchen
Crying.

LAURA PERRY

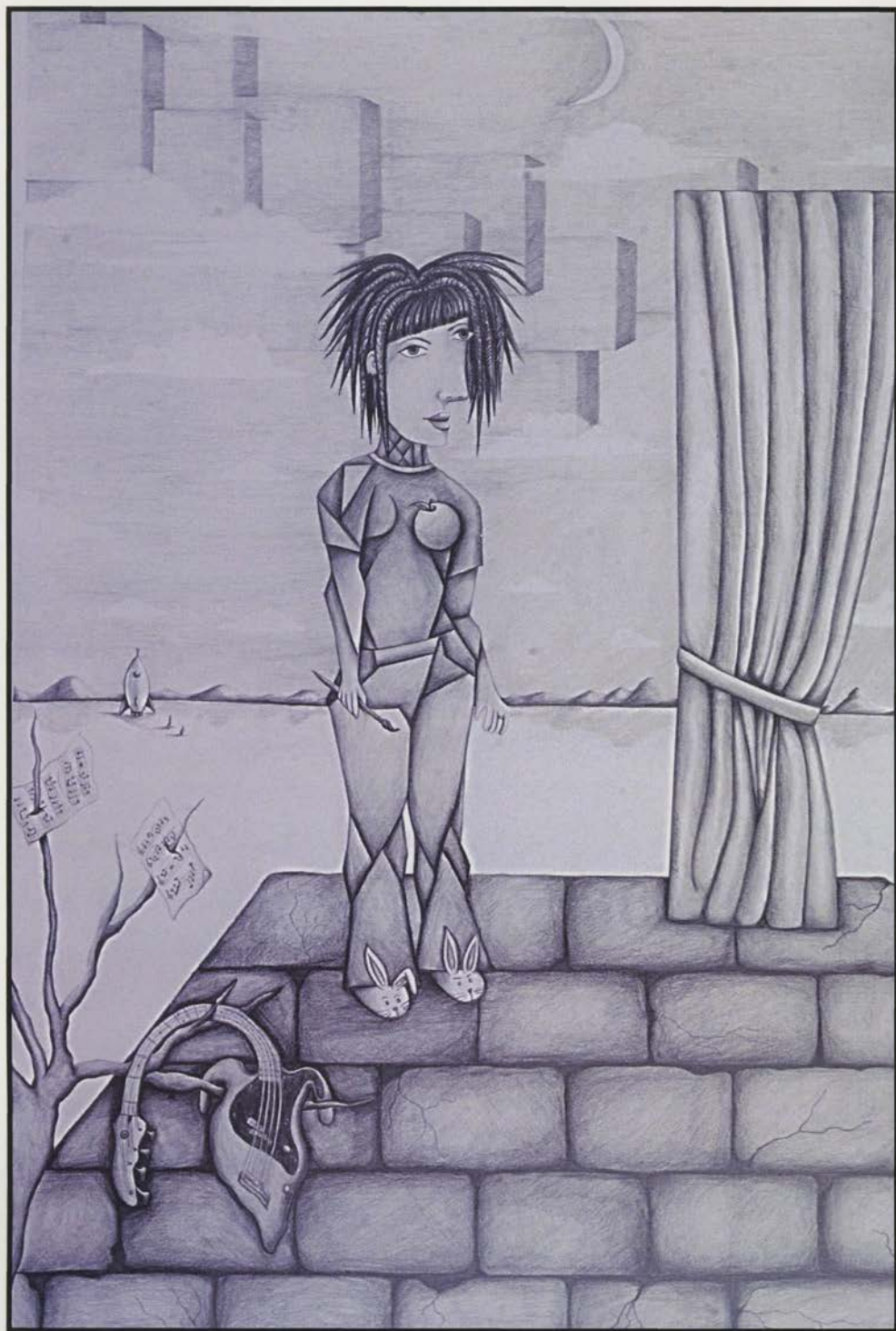
Create

Deep inside of the parallels
Up into the dream we become
Like the gleaming aroma of sunbeams
Things will arrive that be already there
Already among us
Promise impulse to us
To our very being wishing
Lean onward like the stars of tomorrow
I was required to create,
To dwell inside of a yawning breathing
Beneath a darkness choking fastener
The clearance rose like a resolute white
Where the rabble saints beclouded a novel way to cooperate.
The fluid corners coming from every direction
To us as a twilight night
Where only the venture of, had to become to remain.
In all eyes to see
The verdant flowed veracity.
The droning drawn out the clouds
The stroking sky, so many still
Where the dirt remarked the sticky, wet earth of it all
The night rays playing on the skin
Real it looked.
The fingers curled, seemed to reach out
Changeling a magic of another
The bleached blue rustled
Too faded to turn the leaf
A curtain of color wash the night
Where past the sky the sliver lay
The breeze shrieked, grazing the blue
Murmuring amorphous dreams
Quaking so badly vision shaking
Killing rather than revealing the identity engaged
In light of what passed.
Traveling gradually over the skin
The beautiful so whole
The sky meets the glow
Where the need was to feel, complete
I made my way to the passage alone
Like the flaming tip of a lance
The certainty bowed in the pane of truth
Leave go of me.
The deep heavenly hole of freedom blinked his stare
When sacrifice was surrender.



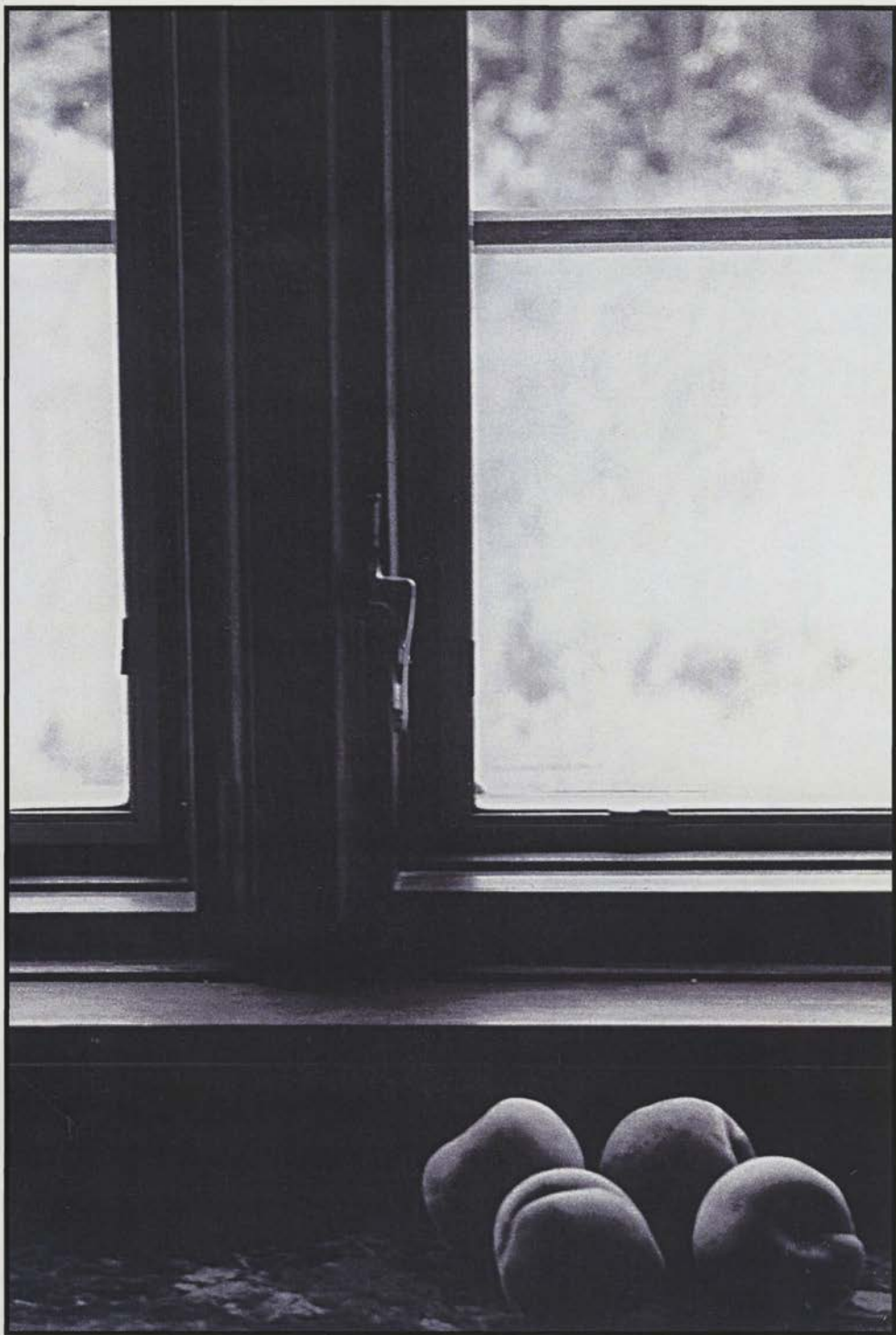
Lori Tincher

Concentration



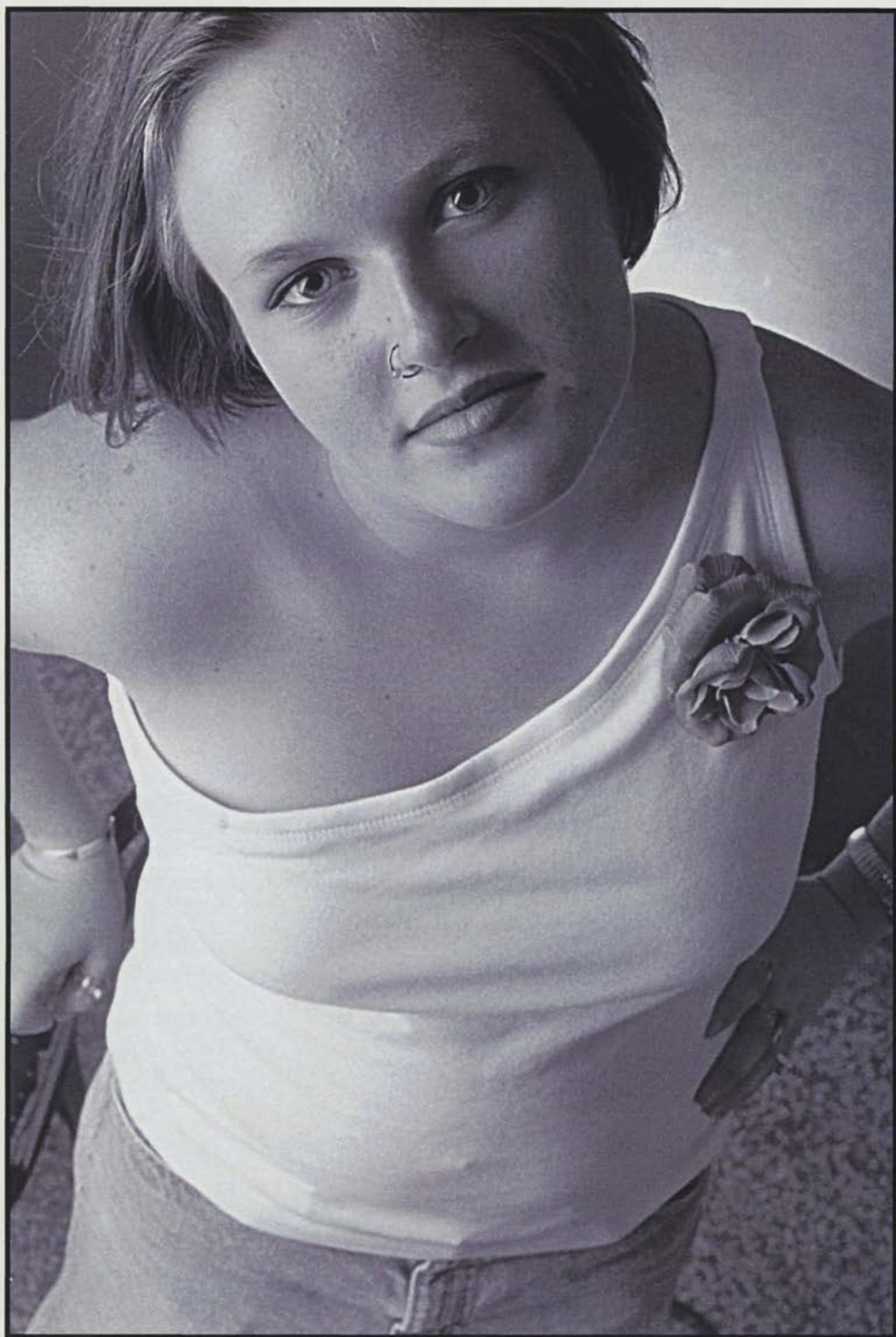
Lea Ann Saunders

Self-Portrait



Jessica Hazelrigg-Gerrish

Grammy's Peaches



Peggy J. Spencer

Mariah



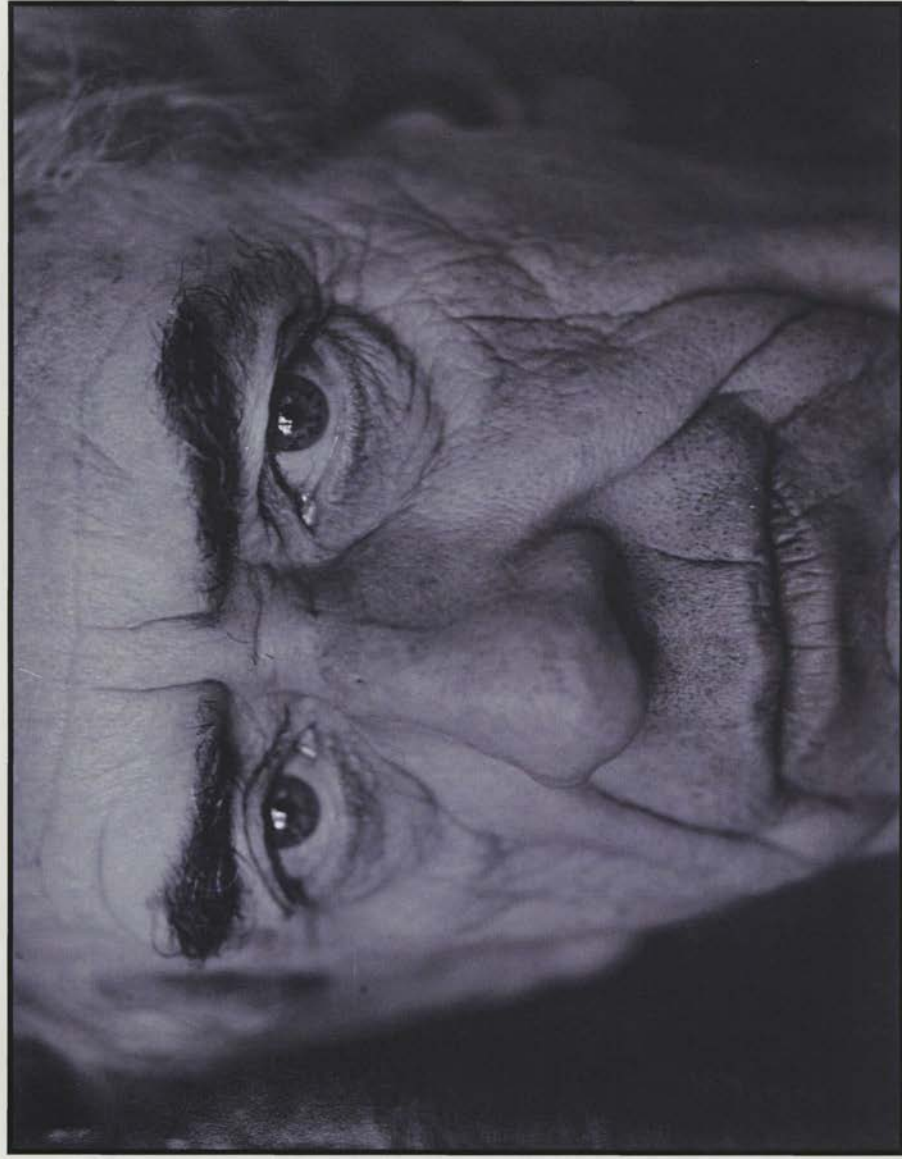
Samantha Cunning

The Fallen Angel



Tim Jones

Helter-Skelter



Sara Pennington

Papaw #2



J. GLENN FERRELL

Doc

"Doc."

"Damn bastard!"

"What? Doc, that you?"

"Sonofabitch!"

"Who said that?"

Homer Cline looked around Doc Putnam's waiting room for the owner of the high pitched voice. He didn't see anyone.

"Doc, anyone here?"

"Damn bastard!"

It was coming from the treatment area. Homer stuck his head cautiously through the door.

"Doc Putnam."

"Sonofabitch!"

Startled, Homer turned his head to the left to see a black bird, with red beak, and white markings on its wings.

"Oh. So, that was you."

"He's a mynah bird. Did he scare you?"

Laurie McCoy was coming through one of the doors. Homer recognized her; they were distant kin on his mother's side. He didn't know she was working for Doc.

"Just wondered who he was talking about. I hope it's not me. Where's Doc Putnam?"

"The bird's a gift from a patient, Robert Taylor. Doc's not here. Can I help you?"

"I had an appointment for nine. I've never been here before."

"Who made the appointment?"

"Doc answered the phone when I called Friday."

"Oh, I see. Doc is always doing that and forgets to write it down. I was out Friday afternoon. He's forgotten you. I'll call him. It'll be just a few minutes. He doesn't live far."

Homer took a seat and waited. He hated going to the dentist, but things had to be tended to eventually. One tooth was far gone. More would need filling for sure.

Laurie returned. "Doc said to get x-rays. Follow me?"

Homer followed Laurie to the back room. It took a few minutes. That wasn't too bad. He resumed his seat in the waiting room.

Doc Putnam was not from Francisboro or Makamie County, from somewhere in Northern Kentucky. He'd been in these parts four or five years. People said he was a little odd. Homer had never been to him before. The last time he'd seen any dentist must have been ten years ago.

Finally, the front door opened and Doc Putnam stepped in. His dirty blond hair was all tousled like it had not been combed and he'd just gotten out of

bed. He carried one dirty work shoe in each hand.

"I'll be with you in a minute. Laurie get him into the chair in the first room."

Homer settled into the chair. Doc was there shortly, hair still not combed, but wearing his shoes.

"Looks like you may need a root canal, son, and two fillings."

"Don't need no root canal Doc, just jerk her out."

"Well I can do that if you want. Want the fillings today?"

"Yep, do it Doc."

"Are you the nervous sort? You look nervous."

The only thing Homer was nervous about was wondering if Doc Putnam washed his hands after putting on those dirty shoes.

"No, don't reckon I'm any more than the next person."

"You look nervous to me. I'm going to give you this gas. That will relax you."

"Don't think I need it Doc."

"Yes you do. Now, just put this mask on and breathe through your nose. It won't take if you breathe though your mouth."

Homer hesitated, but obeyed. Presently, his toes begin to feel far away.

"My feet feel funny."

"Just wait, your whole body will feel it in a minute."

And, it did. Homer thought the whole room moved back.

Doc Putnam pried Homer's mouth open. Homer wasn't sure that he was seeing things correctly or thinking straight. The needle on that syringe looked awful long. Doc smiled as he stuck it first into his left lower gum, twisted it around, projected it farther, turned it more, and then poked it farther still. Then he repeated all of that on his upper right side. Homer thought he looked like he was having too much fun.

The gas was affecting Homer's thinking. What if this was all a scheme to do him in? This fellow in the white coat and rumpled hair looked a lot like the mad scientist in that movie Homer watched on the Sci Fi channel last week. Was he engineering Homer's demise or planning on using him in a ghastly experiment? Homer figured that he'd better breath through his mouth. He couldn't feel his mouth.

What was that cowgirl doing here? There beside Doc Putnam stood a petite blond who looked familiar to Homer. She was wearing a red western hat, a red vest with fringes, a western style shirt open low revealing her ample breasts, and a very short mini skirt, also with fringe. Letting his eyes drop, he saw trim legs, but couldn't see low enough to tell if she was wearing boots. She was holding her jaw and talking about her tooth.

"All right, let's move him to the other room and I'll look at it," Doc was saying.

Doc and Laurie coaxed Homer to an upright position and led him to the next treatment room. Once settled in, Homer napped for a while. His head was clearing as he woke up. His mouth also felt less numb. A while longer and Doc returned.

"Well, took care of her. How are you doing?"

"I can think clearly now, Doc. I can feel my tongue and lips too."

"We'll have to numb you again. Let's get the gas."

"No Doc, skip the gas this time."

"OK, you sure? Your call. You might feel a little discomfort."

Discomfort nothing! Doc Putnam repeated his torturous procedure with the needle, left side and then right. It hurt! Doc left the room. Homer lost feeling in his lips and mouth.

Doc Putnam returned. He took his instrument and took hold of the offending partial tooth. He pulled, twisted, pulled some more, twisted again. Homer felt like his lower jaw was being pried off. Finally, the tooth let go.

"Well, let's take care of the fillings next. You still all right?"

"Uh huh." Homer muttered.

Doc fitted this foil like stuff around one of the teeth that he intended to fill.

"You hungry?"

Homer only had coffee for breakfast, but food was not on his mind. He couldn't exactly talk with his mouth numb and that stuff packed into one jaw.

He got out a slurred, "No!"

"Well, I'm hungry. I've got to eat. No breakfast you know. You just wait here. I'll be back."

Homer wasn't going anywhere. He turned his head so he could see the clock on the wall. Eleven fifteen already. Doc took his lunch early. Tired from the second torture treatment, Homer closed his eyes and slept again. When he opened them next, it was one thirty; he could feel his mouth now, drooling from where it was pried open with the foil and padding in his jaw. No Doc Putnam anywhere.

Homer made his way down the hallway toward the front of the office.

"Laurie?"

Nothing.

"Doc?"

"Damn bastard!"

That bird again. "Doc?"

"Sonofabitch!"

"He talking to me or you?"

Sid Sizemore was in the waiting room.

"Seen Doc?" Homer asked the best he could with his packed mouth.

"I had a one o'clock appointment myself. Ain't seen hide nor hair of him. Don't know where Laurie is either."

"Been here since nine. Numbed twice. Fell asleep in the chair. Doc said he's going to eat."

"Oh, I bet he's gone over to the lake for the buffet at the lodge. That is where he likes to eat. I heard he's there most every day."

"Lake! Lodge! That's twenty miles!"

Homer figured that Doc had gone to the diner. The long delay could be explained by a trip to the lodge restaurant.

Still drooling, Homer tore the foil and padding from his right jaw.

"Now I can talk. That beats all. I've been here all morning and now part of the afternoon. I took the day off from work. Thought I'd get this taken care of in the morning and have the afternoon to do some fencing."

"You never can tell about Doc. He's a character, you know?"
Homer didn't know. He'd heard talk; but he didn't like to listen to gossip. Now, he was personally involved.

"What do you mean?"

"You know Barney Meyer?"

"Yeh, one of the Meyers from Knox Fork, out your end of the county."

Homer took a seat.

"Yep, same one. He doesn't always pay his bills on time. Doc made him a set of teeth on credit. a year later, he still hadn't paid. Barney doesn't come to town very often; so Doc hadn't seen him in months. Barney doesn't have a phone."

"So, Doc couldn't contact him about his money?"

"That's right. But, Barney came in for feed one day. Doc just happened to be coming from the clinic. He likes to go over there between patients to flirt with the nurses. He saw Barney getting out of his pickup."

"So, what did Doc do?"

"Told him he wanted his teeth back."

"I suppose Barney thought they were his teeth."

"Sure did, but that didn't stop Doc. He got Barney down on the sidewalk and removed the teeth right then and there. Told Barney he could have them back when he paid for them."

Homer got up and started to pace. It was difficult for him to sit still.

"I heard about that. Didn't know if the boys at the store were just kidding."

"No, seen it myself. I was at the auto parts and saw it all. Doc has his ways about money."

"What do you mean?"

"Pays for everything by check. Came into the drug store one day for a candy bar. Wrote a check for fifty-three cents. Never carries any cash."

"That is a little odd."

"Lady at the drug store said his checks usually don't clear either. He likes to write checks, but doesn't make many deposits."

After taking a look out the front window, Homer sat down again.

"So, doesn't he have any money?"

"Oh, Doc has money. He just doesn't trust banks. He keeps it hidden at home."

"How do you know that?"

"Well, his stepson Ronnie found his stash last year. My cousin Ethel teaches at the high school. Said Ronnie brought a paper bag full of green stuff to school one day. He was passing out twenties and fifties to all of his friends."

"Must of gone over big."

"The kids thought it must be fake. Ronnie gave away a couple thousand before one of the teachers saw him passing bills and sent him to the principal's office. She thought it was a drug deal."

"What happened?"

"They called Doc. He came right over and wanted his money back."

"So, what did they do?"

"They made an announcement on the intercom for anyone that had received anything from Ronnie that day to bring it to the office."

"Well, did they?"

"They got about fifteen hundred back. Several hundred they never found. Ronnie couldn't say who all he'd given money to. There was nineteen thousand in that poke. Doc had it in an oatmeal box in the pantry."

"Was he upset?"

"Let's put it this way. Ronnie is in a military school in Ohio this year."

"I didn't know about Doc."

"I bet you didn't hear about that steer either?"

"What steer?"

"The sick one that died on him. Actually, Doc drowned it."

"How did he do that?"

"It was sick and Doc called the vet. When he found out how much it would cost extra for the vet to come out to his house, he said he would bring it to the office."

"Well, I'd do the same for just one steer."

"But, Doc don't own no pickup. He was driving a station wagon, and not one that belonged to him. His car was being worked on at Bob Taylor's dealership in Siverton. Bobby loaned him the station wagon for a few days. He used it to carry the steer."

"How do you get a steer into a station wagon?"

"It was a young one and Doc got it laid down in the back of the vehicle somehow. Bet that animal fussed!"

"Maybe he gave it gas."

"What's that?"

"Oh, never mind; you'll find out."

"Well, he got it onto its side. Of course, he had a patient to see first at the office."

"You mean he just left the steer in the car while he came in to treat a patient?"

"Yep, and you see how Doc doesn't get in no hurry?"

"Sure do."

"Well, it was a hot day in June, two years ago. Doc got to thinking about how this steer might be getting hot and thirsty. He did leave the window down."

"What could he do?"

"Well, Doc excused himself and drove over to the Bud Martin's service station. Asked to use his water hose. Put the hose in the steer's mouth, turned on the water, and drowned the poor thing."

"Well, I guess he saved money on the vet bill?"

"Sure did. But Doc had his patient to tend to. He went back to the office and worked the rest of the day with that dead animal in the back of the car. When he came out, the animal had swollen and was stuck."

"How did he get it out?"

"Well, you or I might find help. Doc is the independent sort. He just

drove the vehicle for the next two days and returned it to Bobby Taylor as it was."

"With the dead steer inside?"

"Yep, and smelling by now! Bobby was not too happy. Doc said it was his problem."

"Why are you still coming to see him?"

"He's not a bad dentist if he can keep his mind on his work."

They heard the front door. It was Doc and Laurie coming back from their late lunch. It was two thirty by now.

"Well, what are you doing out here? Let's get you back into that chair so I can finish you up. I don't have all day!"

"But Doc, the numbing has worn off again."

"We'll fix that. Don't worry. You want gas?"

"No thank you Doc!"

From the door to the treatment room, "Damn bastard! Sonofabitch!"

MARK VANDERPOOL

Rabbit Killer

An out-of-work boogieman
in a blue-collar neighborhood, threatens soft rabbits,
but wants to get drunk and giddy all over town.
It's the business of turning the silver screw
that gets him down.
Yes, it envelops like a fog in a freezer,
When you can't find an ice cream sandwich,
But if you stay cold enough long enough,
Everything that used to wrinkle your nose
And prickle your skin
Shines like rare jewels and tastes like ambrosia
Smuggled under the tongue. It's not
sour fruit that I'm licking at:
Just a wound, an angry one,
a gorgeous war mark reflected on an angel's face,
Yes, a well-patterned scar forged in fire.
Look, it's shimmering, bright as a constellation.
It's a skin-written liturgy, not meant for
whispering near vaguely consenting instruments.
And it's a secret poison too potent for sharing,
the worst kind in the cupboard to keep.
It burns in the chest like a lungful of campfire,
No, a Scandinavian death tongue, the sound of a gypsy rattle.
An ancient curse scratched on the torn ceiling of a Volkswagen bus.
A spent charm, a lost verse, the stare of a rare fish
From a musty Malaysian market,
Its eyes like yours.

CONTRIBUTOR'S NOTES

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JOHN GREY lives in Providence, RI. His work has recently appeared in *Hawaii Pacific Review*, *Poet Lore*, and *National Forum*, and is also upcoming in *South Carolina Review* and *Pennsylvania English*.

RICHARD FEIN lives and writes in Brooklyn, NY.

J. GLENN FERREL lives and writes in Menifee County, KY.

STEPHANIE STOBAUGH would like to include her name among those in the writing community here in Morehead, Kentucky. Her poetry springs from sources much more interesting than herself, so this time she would like to thank her family who gave her life and for teaching her how to read. Thanks.

LAURA PERRY lives in Olive Hill, KY and has a beautiful son named Waylon, who is named after the King.

MARK VANDERPOOL currently resides in Olive Hill, KY, and is a self-proclaimed good witch and animal rights activist.

LEA ANN SAUNDERS is a Senior Art Major who is pleased to be in Inscape again this year. She can't think of anything else to write, so thanks.

JESSICA HAZELRIGG-GERRISH is a sophomore at MSU majoring in Art Education. Social and Political art is what truly captivates her. She is currently working with different mediums and formats. She is hoping to teach art, and eventually become an art historian travelling the world with her husband and their two wonderful children taking pictures and painting the gardens at Giverny.

LORI TINCHER is a Senior art major who wants to pursue photography as a career. She would like to thank her friend, Adam Thornsburg, for his patience and allowing her to photograph him.

TIM JONES is an Art major from Olive Hill, KY. As an art student he explores as many areas of art as he can, including Photography and Graphic Design.

MILES DUNCIL II is an Army brat who loves Pearl Jam and will use his bio section of this semester's INSCAPE to shamelessly promote their music. Riot Act, Pearl Jam's seventh studio album will be released November 12th. Go Buy It!

PEGGY J. SPENCER is a graduate student in photography at Morehead State University from Owingsville, Kentucky. In her spare time she enjoys writing poetry and talking about herself in the third person.

SAMANTHA CUNNING

SARA PENNINGTON

