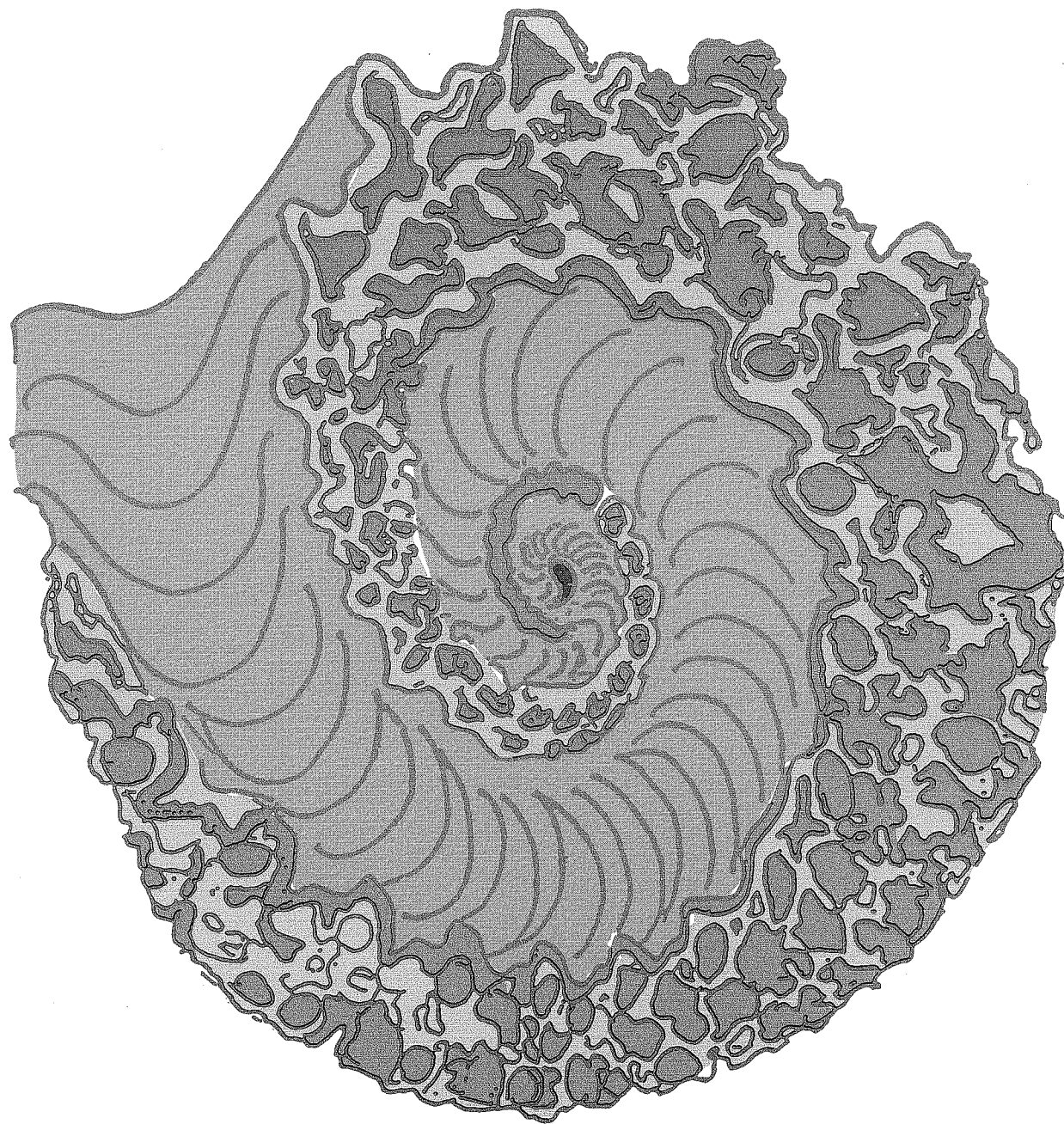




# New Tricks

The Official Magazine of the Literary Stunt Dogs







# New Tricks

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*The New Tricks' staff thanks all of the contributors.*



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## Foreword

The magazine is almost finished—forged in the fiery loins of Beadle Hall (erected in 1886). The Editor (Hephaestus) eyes me anxiously. He's waiting for the foreword and is acutely aware of my procrastinating nature. The clock, uncaring of my plight, ticks on.

*New Tricks* (The Official Magazine of the Literary Stunt Dogs) has risen from the ashes of the *Dakotah Poesy*. The *Poesy* was Dakota State's literary magazine from 1986 to 1990. Sadly, the *Poesy* died of natural causes and DSU became a university without a literary magazine. Not for long. For in mid-September a young writer (Brian Bargmann) snatched a brand from the smoldering embers and ran with it. Thanks to Brian's undying efforts—constantly stinging the haunches of the sleeping cow of apathy, goading students and faculty, and occasionally screaming and blurry-eyed—here it is, *finally*, after eight months—Volume I, Number I. Please try to remember that the perfect poem will never be written. For this let us thank the gods and the next page.

□ Stephen Bell

## ARTICLE 1

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.





## Home

*The summer sun drenches your body in warmth.*

*The scent of fresh-cut grass and  
Shower-dampened earth renews our being.*

*The cattle appear as miniatures  
Grazing in a pasture of plush green carpet.*

*Virgin blue skies are trimmed by the  
Emerald leaves of Spring's magic.*

*Clothes dangle from a bare  
Wire suspended between two poles,  
Trading their dampness for Nature's perfume.  
The smell of fried chicken*

*Wafts from an open window,  
Calling to your taste buds.*

*Your stomach replies with  
A passionate growl.*

— Melissa Kaul

*A frozen rose  
A dead robin  
Naked, the trees shriek as they  
cast off their plumage  
in the twilight, not wanting to sleep.  
The procrastinating birds  
now wish they had left  
now in a frenzy of twittering  
they proclaim the coming freeze  
not everyone will survive the coming winter.*

— Stephen Bell



## **Just Wish I Could Fly Too**

*The winter snow reminds me,  
Of how we were before.  
The cold winds blew so fiercely.  
We were nestled on the floor.  
The fires glowed so brightly.  
Their magic felt so warm.  
I held you close to me.  
Your shelter from the storm.*

*The cool spring rain is falling,  
And so soon are my tears.  
The pain is never ending.  
My body's plagued with fears.  
My happiness has ended,  
Now all I do is cry.  
Why did He have to take you?  
Why did you have to fly?*

*The summer sun burns hotter  
Than any year before.  
My soul is growing weaker.  
I just can't take much more.  
Where will I be tomorrow?  
Don't want to be without you.  
Just wish that He'd come and take me.  
Just wish I could fly too.*

*The leaves of autumn are changing,  
But I just see black and white.  
I wander lost through the daytime.  
I lie awake every night.  
It's been a year since I've lost you.  
I still don't know what to do.  
The only thing I can think of...  
...I just wish I could fly too.*

— Thomas R. Cummins





## Cold December

*DID YOU KNOW THAT IN SOUTH DAKOTA THERE ARE FAT BUSHY RED SQUIRRELS THAT CAN BE SEEN ON COLD DECEMBER DAYS HUNGRILY SEARCHING FOR HIDDEN TREASURES?*

*-other days the squirrels  
can be seen flat and  
stuck to the road  
a frozen treat for some happy fool.*

— Stephen Bell

## The First Day of Spring

*On the first day of spring  
The worm breaks free  
from its cocoon  
And in its greatest beauty  
flies home  
free.  
Oh how my soul yearns  
for the first day of spring.*

— Nancy Winker

## Shrouded Forest

*A veil of gray conceals the dawn  
restraining its warmth and light.  
The grass bends gently under the load  
of the night's heavy breath.*

*The cool, gray mist provides a stillness  
as we seek protection in the wood.  
Riders move with reverent silence,  
understanding nature's peace.*

*The damp, dark earth quiets hoofbeats  
and fills the air with a primeval smell.  
A gray, green canopy weeps upon us,  
the well of nature's gentle tears.*

*As we top the hills, we once again  
are engulfed by the mist and cold.  
But, briefly, we were one with the forest,  
an ancient, forgotten world.*

— Debra Stamm





## Mounting

I silently,  
unseemingly  
pass  
to a spiritual plane  
of Calm...  
enclosed in Serene -  
as the wind,  
Unseen;  
I haven't a pressure  
or qualm  
with the existence  
Outside  
of potential Despair -  
I'm safe,  
I've Become  
One  
with my mare.

— Brenda Grimm





## Brazil

*Geckos crawl lazily over the walls;  
a man is walking slowly down the hall.  
His footsteps fade silently into the light  
of the dark midnight.*

*Geckos crawl lazily over the walls;  
a man is walking slowly down the hall,  
a soft-shoe step with a cautionary  
tone.*

*No, sorry; Lileth's not home.  
She stepped out a moment before  
you showed up here at our door.  
Try again sometime, or come in & wait  
for her, though I'm sure tonight she'll  
be late.*

*Geckos crawl languidly over the walls,  
picking off moths one by one  
as the flocks flutter by  
my field of view  
obscuring the television screen.  
I turn my gaze to the peach tree  
outside,  
giving up the last fruit of the season.  
She has plucked from the tree,  
& now it must die.*

*Geckos crawl lazily over the walls;  
toads slip flatly under the door  
and hide in the flower pots,  
waiting for her  
to come & water.*

*Geckos crawl silently over the walls  
of the bureaucrat hall.  
She stands in a line to give them the  
forms  
to buy the shoes old and worn.  
Four hours down, the line moves slow;  
three more desks, five hours to go.*



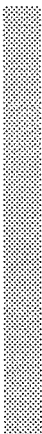
## Travelogue

*I'll take silence instead of implied lies meant to deceive—  
Even knowing you'll read a false guilt  
Behind my speechless statement;  
Another implied lie, but preferable  
To one that's masked as truth.  
I could choose my words  
To bury fact  
Beneath a facade of harmless innocence,  
And know I lied, speaking half the truth;  
And you'd believe...*

*How did I reach this place in love of you  
Where it is kinder to us both  
For me to stand convicted  
Of something I cannot achieve?*

— Vola Kollmar

## The Black Hole



*Once I dreamed you were a ghost,  
A figment of my imagination.  
I thought that all the things we've done  
Never really happened.  
An empty feeling filled my soul  
And I was all alone.  
I saw myself floating lifelessly  
Through a black hole.  
I rolled over, my arms outstretched;  
My hands grasping for reality.  
There was nothing.*

— Nancy Winker



"A thousand slimy things lived on, and so did I."

— Samuel Coleridge "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"



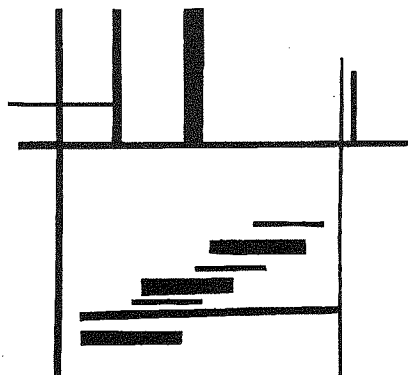
## Heaven is Too Close to Hell

I was trying to remember if I had seen the shoe in a dream, or if I was remembering something that had actually happened. The voices talking in the background paused, and my focus lazily drifted back to full picture.

"And just a reminder about Beadlemania, which will be at the Mundt Library on ...."

I looked at the shoe again. I was sure I had encountered a shoe like that somewhere before, and I was very intent in my attempt to remember when. My mind was flashing between the shoe connected to someone's foot on my left, and the one that had been mysteriously etched in my memory. They were identical.

The foggy half-memory found its way into the right slot. That's right, Cass had shoes on like that the day she had rolled up the hill to my house on her mountain bike; it was a Sunday afternoon about a week ago. She came pedalling up the hill, then hopped off three-quarters of the way up and pushed her bike the rest of the way to the front door.



I had been inside, and had quietly watched her approach from my front window. Beautiful, blonde, buxom, and twenty-two, she was a blue-eyed sparkler that lit up my insides like a blow-torch in a closet.

Her head was down as she was pushing, and I was solemnly amazed that such a creature would put forth so much effort to be in my presence. She rapped on the door and then let herself in.

"Hey Brad, what you doing?"

"Oh man, I was just leaving..."

I didn't have to be at rehearsal for about an hour, but I began hurrying through my house, turning off switches and stuffing things in my pockets.

Cass had flopped on my couch, and watched me with a bummed-out expression on her face.

"Are you going to be around later on?"

"I'll have to go up to the school, I've got a shitload of homework that has to be done."

I was lying, and looked away as I did so. Cass lit up a cigarette and began inspecting her legs. They were shapely and tan, and seemed to climb for miles before disappearing into the crotch of her faded denim cut-offs. The view made my body buzz like a dam about to burst.

I don't make it a practice of avoiding women that are incredibly attractive to me; I was just protecting myself. I had fallen hard for Cass the summer before, and it had



turned out that Cass didn't want to catch me. To make things worse, she had hooked up with a close friend of mine, so I had seen them together more than enough times to disintegrate any dreams of having her.

My ego had been pulverized, and I had sunk into a murky period of heavy drinking and lonely songs.

After a month's worth of hangovers and worthless existence, I started living again. I met a few different girls, and Cass became a numb memory. Winter passed into spring, and one day Cass suddenly showed up at my door. She and my "buddy" had split-up, and boy was she glad to see me. I was surprised, and happy to see her, but it felt strange. It was like a force-field had formed around my heart. The desire was still there, but it wouldn't let itself out. I had built up immunity.

I've spent a lot of time with Cass since then. We always have a good time, but a part of me is always hidden. I love to be with her, but it's kind of sad. She's like my sunny-day rain.

"Will you give me a call when you have some free time?"

I'd love to, I thought.

"I'll try, but it's real tight for me right now."

"Well, I'll see ya later then."

"Okay."

"Anyone who has stories due please get them to me sometime this week, and remember to make enough copies for the rest of the class..." I looked up from the floor in time to notice the instructor paying a particular amount of attention to me as she said this. I made eye-contact with her to verify that I knew she meant me. Class was over so I grabbed my books and walked out the door. It was time for me to fly.

□ Brian Bargmann



## Retracted Murder Statement

*I would stab you to death  
With shining blades of words  
And watch you lie bleeding where you fall.*

*I would not laugh at all  
And looking wouldn't make me cry  
A single tear for red spilled in the dirt.*

*My heart is not so tender as it was:  
You always preferred softness  
In words and in pillows and in women.*

*Now I would have your heart's blood  
Spill on this frozen ground  
Until the traitor lay silent in your chest.*

*Then I would gather up each drop  
And let it trickle back  
For of all your loves, I may have loved you best.*

— Vola Kollmar

## In Limbo

*Solitary vigil by a phone that never rings  
nail biting, fidgeting, watching, and waiting,  
clock hands move in slow reverse*

*Yearning, as a former lover lingers in a memory  
Christmas Eve anticipation without gifts  
steel vacuum filled with cold blackness*

*Grieving, vacant, lonely heart  
watching as the tide flows out  
haunting melody, a sad refrain,  
...don't you know, it's the end of the world*

*Peter Pan from Never Land  
wishing, wishing on a star  
Wanting never makes it so  
I'll think of it tomorrow...*

— Jean Thompson





*He possesses her heart.  
 He invades her mind.  
 His words are her religion.  
 His kiss is her sin.  
 Piercing guilt decomposes her existence.  
 He would give his last breath to her dying soul.  
 He would just give up.  
 Her anguish is in vain.  
 The decision is clear.*

— Melissa Kaul

### Walled

*fragments —  
 bits —  
 teasers  
 he offers —  
 with a Dulling  
 dimming his eyes. . .  
 (the cold in Solitary  
 pays for the quiet —  
 Nothing inside is free)  
 he tells me but little  
 but, God, I can see!  
 I don't hear the Details —  
 they're etched in his eyes —  
 I don't need to be made to Realize  
 the wrenching, racking sobs  
 of his heart-tearing  
 silent cry. . .*

— Brenda Grimm

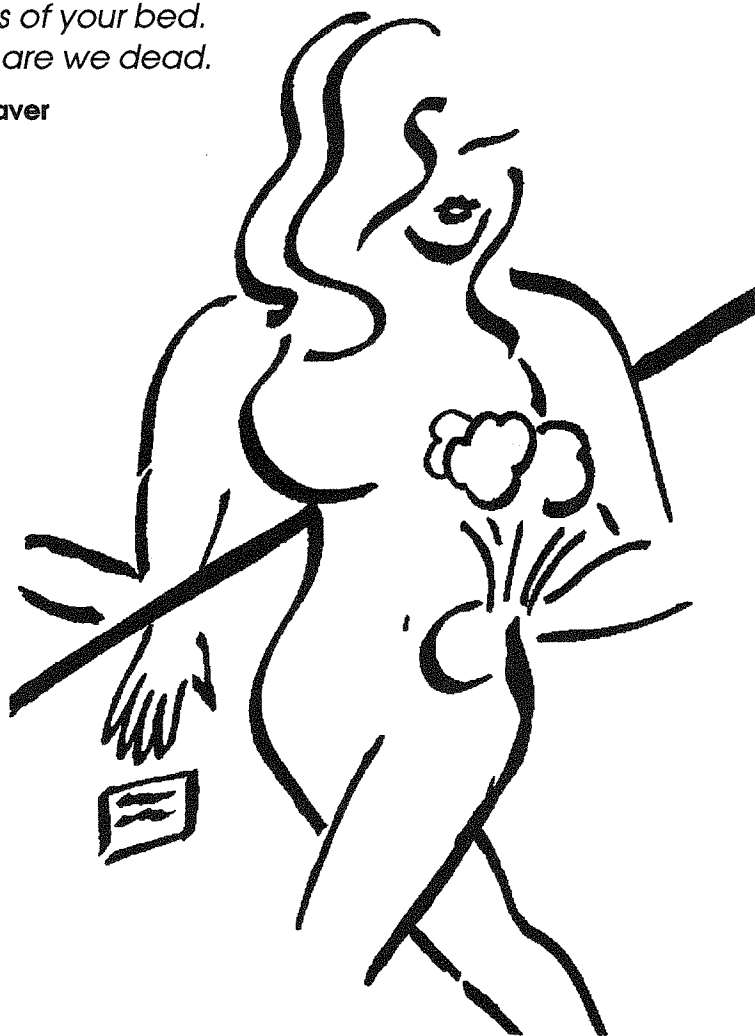


## Dark Heart

For Jessica Anne

*Somewhere, in the back of my head,  
I knew what you meant, I heard what you said.  
And even though I had to think twice,  
I knew what you wanted: a sacrifice.  
Methedrine love and amphetamine lust;  
a midnight rite—cheap, deadly, and just.  
We rode the lightning across a black sky,  
seducers of life not afraid to die.  
'Twas a two-flavor smoke dream, hours from the sun.  
Gunmetal and oil taste cold against my tongue.  
Dark hearts, in the dark depths of your bed.  
We no longer live, but neither are we dead.*

— W.A. Seaver





## Unborn Child

*To the unborn child I never knew,  
I was fifteen then, I am now thirty-two.  
A horrible mistake, a major regret,  
It felt so awful, I'll never forget.*

*You were only two months conceived.  
You weren't very well received.  
When I found out, I lost your dad,  
And I lost the child I should've had.*

*I was only fifteen years old.  
I ended your life and felt so cold.  
I feel so empty of something now.  
I wish I could live it over somehow.*

*I've lived my life with you in my heart.  
I wish I could've made a new start.  
Something that happened so long ago.  
Oh how I wish I would've said No!*

*I never did anything with my life.  
It has been full of grief and strife.  
You were killed with a knife, as shall I.  
I think about you and I scream and cry.*

*I'm ever so sorry, my little one,  
To have ended your life that should've begun.  
I feel remorse, I truly do,  
So I will avenge the spirit of you.*

*My life has never mattered to me.  
I killed my child just to be free.  
I never deserved a single breath.  
I had caused an innocent's death.*

— anonymous



## A Final Note

*To the end the darkness remains,  
Flying with its talons outstretched  
Its ravenous beauty growing stronger  
Moving towards its demise in fury.*

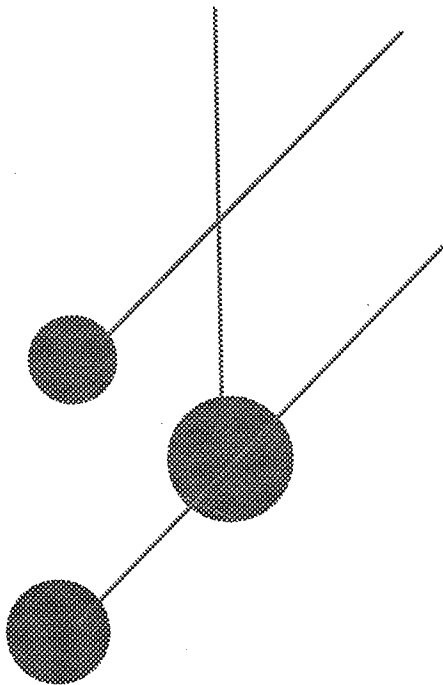
*Murderous flight is given with  
Tortuous damnation to the wings.  
The sinful disbelieving is no longer  
Absolved in puritanical fire.*

*Debilitating hate of the illusionary  
Out with the evocation of oaths.  
The messenger of doom and eternity alights;  
Readiness to the quick or the dead.*

— Dave Colberg

*Don't ask me for  
more than I can give.  
Don't ask me for  
a promise, I won't keep.  
Don't ask me for  
a future, I don't have.  
Don't ask me for  
a life, I can't live.*

— Heidi M. Zumbrun



## The Knife

*Shining, glistening  
blade of steel  
Reflects a painful  
flash of light.  
A blink of an eye,  
A gasp for air.  
A trickle of blood  
drips  
down the edge;  
A chill runs down  
my spine.  
But I cannot move:  
The knife has conquered me.*

— Nancy Winker

## Untitled

Your silent invisible tears  
of heart-scarring despair  
wet my soul.

A cyclotic downpour  
of Anguished blade-sharp  
Penetrations  
pierced  
my Being.

The electric Anticipation  
at seeing you  
feeling you  
Inhaling you again!  
was deflated  
when

I looked in your eyes —  
and saw the Vultures  
of the Devil's Brigade,  
had scavenged  
their Light...  
their dullness made incarnate  
Dickinson's Remorse.  
I ached to have you small again —  
to rock away your trauma  
The Mighty Thrall  
of Reality's  
Drama...  
is now yours to endure —  
the Disease  
which has no cure  
has destined  
you pay Heed  
to Fate's vindictive  
Unpure...

Will you realize now  
how precious each moment  
how blessed sweet innocence veil?  
along with the downpour  
comes the gusting  
Gales...

Destiny's tears have saturated my soul.

— Brenda Grimm

## An American Tragedy

(Darkgirl)

She's a girl just passing her prime  
of darkness;  
a girl pushed beyond the rules;  
aged decades into the future;  
living a sensitized life  
where the answer to all indecisions  
becomes an automatic  
What the fuck.  
She is sensitized against true affec-  
tion,  
knowing for so long  
only the harsh existence  
in which nobody can trust,  
and nobody loves.  
She is,  
to all appearances,  
a lovely young woman  
full of energy and life,  
but is, on the inside,  
weatherbeaten, tortured,  
and smashed.  
Beauty truly is  
only skin deep.

— W.A. Seaver



## heartbeat

*my heart beats  
BAM - BAM  
for you  
BAM - BAM  
i live*

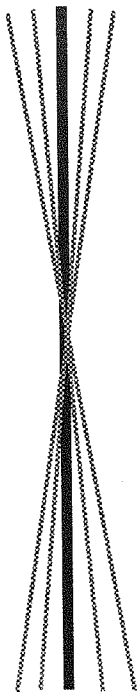
- Stephen Bell



## The White Waves

*She glides into my arms  
from across a stormy sea,  
a passion figure  
embodied here without remorse.  
Come—  
step into the tide.  
Begin a life's journey  
into her passion figure,  
beyond the white waves.*

— W.A. Seaver



## The Growl Thing

*You pull me slowly into your arms  
and in that low, growling voice  
you tell me how much you want me.  
That voice—  
that sounds like the throaty rumblings  
of a big cat on the prowl.  
I'm mesmerized—  
by the wildness of its sound.  
Anticipation—  
shoots just under my skin  
like tiny bolts of lightning tracing down my limbs.  
Do it one more time.  
You know how I love it  
when you do the growl thing.*

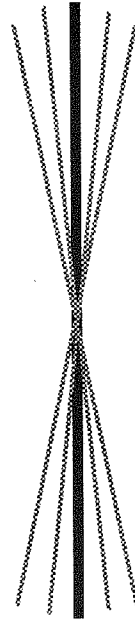
— Deb Stamm

## shall we remember something?

*One morning while my Dad was working  
my Mother loaded me and my brother  
into a car and drove away,  
without saying good-bye.*

*I remember clearly a little note  
sitting on the cluttered kitchen table:  
Sorry Steve—I can't hack it in my  
Mother's handwriting.  
We raced out of town  
My Mother wanted a drink  
My Brother smoked a joint  
I stared out the window  
at the scrolling landscape wondering*

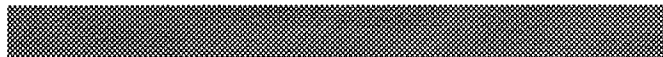
— Stephen Bell



## A Step Ahead

*At times when I feel overwhelmed with life  
I'll turn my back to my problems  
And take a quiet walk, alone  
Up and down the softly rolling backroads  
My dusty tennis shoes scraping the gravel  
Crunching and crackling  
Like a mouth full of fritos  
Sometimes I run—  
A frightened young deer  
Flying swiftly and softly across the clouds  
Seeking a distant sanctuary  
To stop and rest, safe  
From the faceless hunters  
Eternally chasing me down*

— Brian Bargmann





## Catch Me If I Fall

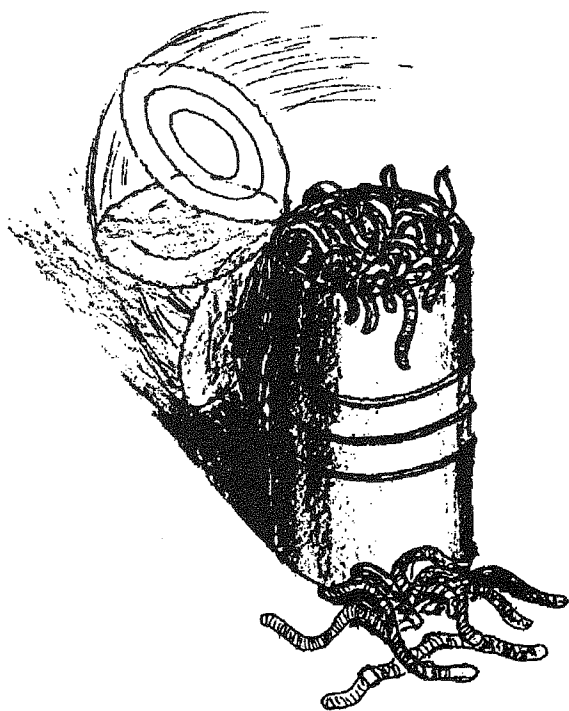
Her small, pale hands brushed the granite marker free of the snow which continued to fall from the dreary, December sky. Her nails were gnawed in ragged edges and the surrounding skin cracked and bled in the snow.

She placed a single rose upon the stone, along with a photograph which was torn and cracked. A little girl and a tall man smiled at her, captured forever on a summer day that seemed so long ago. "Do you remember that day, Grandpa?" she sighed as she kneeled on the frozen ground, "I do."



"Yuck, Grandpa, they're still moving," the little girl squealed as her hands dug into the coffee can filled with dirt and wriggling, slimy worms.

"Don't let 'em bite ya," the thin, grey-haired man said, chuckling as her hand sprang from the can, "I'm just kiddin' honey, I'd never let any nasty old worm get you. As soon as we get to the bridge, I want you to find the biggest, fattest, juiciest one of the bunch."



Warily eyeing her squirming captives, the little girl followed her grandfather to the bridge and cautiously picked out the biggest worm she could find. Piercing the hook through the innocent bait, the man motioned for her to come to the edge of the bridge. "Come on, I'm gonna teach ya how to cast."

Her dark eyes grew bigger as she slowly shook her head, "My mom wouldn't like me to stand at the edge like that. It's too dangerous and I might slip and fall." The little girl's voice mimicked her mother's often uttered warning.

Wondering how his once adventurous daughter had turned into an over-protective mother, the man knelt down smiling and reached an arm around his granddaughter. "Sweetie, you trust me don't you?" The little girl nodded, staring into the warm, brown eyes that mirrored hers.

"Well, I don't want to say your Mom's a worry-wart, but there's this strong railing here, and I'm gonna be right beside ya. There's no way I'm gonna letcha fall. Okay?"

"Well," murmured the girl knowingly, "what if I slip?"

"I'll be right here to catch you if you fall."

"Promise?"

"Cross my heart," swore the man as he dragged his finger across his chest.

"Well—okay," the girl said cautiously, "but we better not let Mom know—she'd be mad." Giggling at her own boldness, the little girl grabbed her grandpa's hand and walked to the edge of the bridge.



Resting her tear-drenched face on the grave, she surrendered her warm memories to the cold. "Grandpa, I'm falling," she whispered as she closed her eyes, "catch me...you promised."

Falling from the gloomy, grey sky, the snow spread a glistening blanket over the red rose, the photograph and the hand in which the treasures limply lay.

□ Deana Hueners

## Moons II

Three golden crescent moons in the southern sky,  
 A column of tiny pendants,  
 Six sliver-edges pointing west:  
 Pointing to fantastical, star-built designs  
 That an earth-bound mind cannot comprehend.

— Vola Kollmar



?

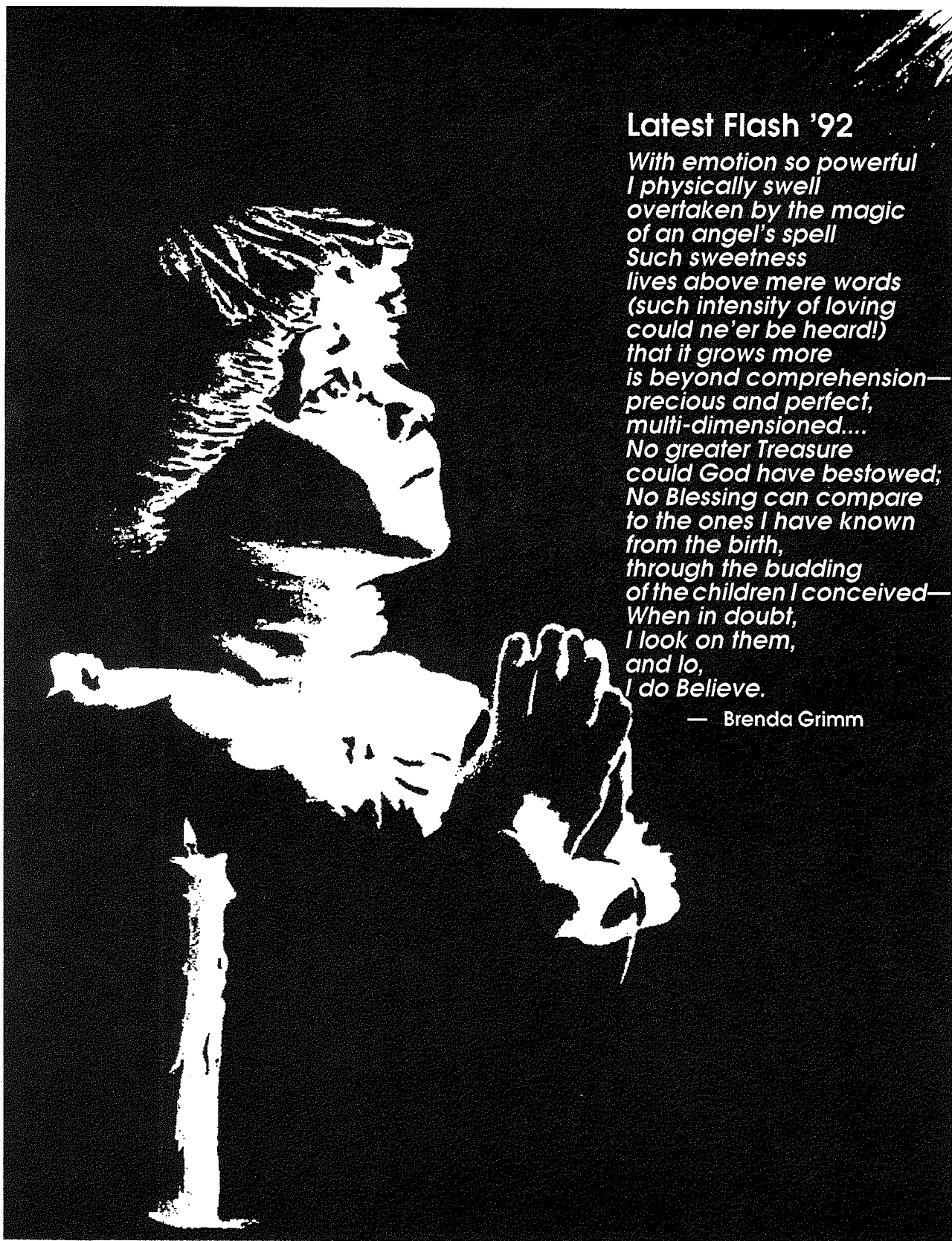
Who is to question  
 the excess  
 of gods,  
 be they devils  
 or heroes  
 or lovers  
 or frauds?

— W.A. Seaver

## I wish I were in Sand County

Offering pert commentary  
 on the slowness  
 of our labor  
 more kinds and degrees of aloneness  
 with inner glee but exterior detachment  
 dank decay disease ridden  
 amplitude  
 stop shrinking the universe  
 pinheads  
 marching morons  
 symbolic Miles Davis blitz cellar  
 certainly all drudges have dull shovels  
 vigor-agog with anticipation-mellow loam  
 hard years of course come to pines  
 as they do to men  
 walk with trees  
 interpolate  
 anglo-saxon doctrine  
 free white and 21  
 ho-ho the wreckless exuberance  
 of the season  
 dwarfed and spindled  
 everyone laughs at so small a bundle  
 of large enthusiasms  
 boundary of the habitable world  
 conservation of wildness is self defeating  
 see and fondle  
 the simple necessity of whistling in the dark.

— Stephen Bell



### Latest Flash '92

With emotion so powerful  
I physically swell  
overtaken by the magic  
of an angel's spell  
Such sweetness  
lives above mere words  
(such intensity of loving  
could ne'er be heard!)  
that it grows more  
is beyond comprehension—  
precious and perfect,  
multi-dimensional....  
No greater Treasure  
could God have bestowed;  
No Blessing can compare  
to the ones I have known  
from the birth,  
through the budding  
of the children I conceived—  
When in doubt,  
I look on them,  
and lo,  
I do Believe.

— Brenda Grimm





## A Conspiracy of Dogs

GRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

woof

yeah, well you see I was tied up to a tree  
and beaten quite often

get away

dog bite victim

I can smell ya buddy

food

— Stephen Bell

## Gizmo

Eyes fixed on the target  
wide, large and clear,  
muscles bunched and ready,  
take-off time draws near.

Ears poised at attention  
now flatten with the sight  
of the target getting closer,  
the moment's almost right.

A slight flick of the tail  
is prelude to the blur  
of sharpened claws and razor fangs  
encased in gray-tan fur.

Release me now you little cheat,  
Attack some other naked feet.

— Debra Stamm

## Puppy Love

Whining

All the puppies were sick

Parvo

One by One they died

Whining

All but one

3 days

No water no food

Whining

She licks my hand

"Just die, please, just die"

the whining must stop

slow

I pick up the shovel

OH GOD OH GOD

WHACK WHACK

Whack, again the shovel falls

the pup finally rests

the whining has stopped

but I still hear it

— smob92



## Deep in Ceaseless Turmoil Can't Cope With Reality

How does he hang on?  
 he's too big to let go.  
 I couldn't believe it was true.  
 the man knows god.  
 two scoops with sprinkles  
 absolutely.  
 watch out boy she'll chew you up  
 tell me tell me  
 whose god are you?  
 America is a ruthless dictator of the world  
 you label me I label you  
 never free.  
 make way for the naked ape  
 you dumb animals.

— Stephen Bell

## I am mad as hell

Today down at the plant  
 a joyous event occurred  
 the baby Jesus was found  
 in the belly  
 of a dead goose  
 unfortunately  
 it was gutted  
 before anyone knew

-I hope you enjoyed this inkling-  
 -We could all use the money  
 -We need the space

— Stephen Bell





## Little Bunnies

Biting heads off little rabbits;  
 watching their cute bodies squirm.  
 I've a shelf of bunny bodies,  
 their muscles rigid, nice and firm.  
 Some I've hollowed, put in candles;  
 other, I just scoop out, and  
 then I've got real bunny slippers,  
 or something cozy for my hands.  
 I find the rest have lots of uses,  
 all but those that I've stomped flat.  
 They can hold my dirty socks,  
 or make nice playmates for my cat.  
 My mailman thinks I'm pretty sick;  
 I let him find them in my box.  
 The schoolkids see them in my yard,  
 planted there in lepus flocks.  
 Churning, churning, bodies turning,  
 I spit their heads out one by one.  
 When there are no rabbits left,  
 I can then have no more fun.

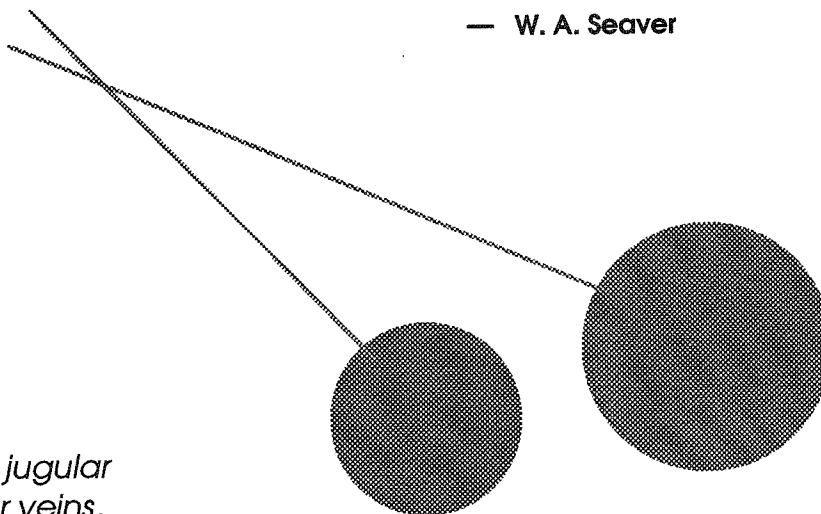
— W. A. Seaver

## Stress

Seeks,  
 Stalks,  
 Pounces and  
 Captures

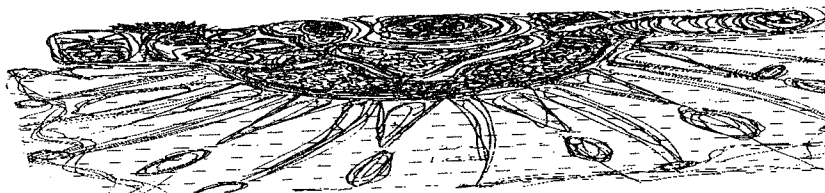
It's mighty jaws grip your jugular  
 Sucking the life from your veins,  
 Leaving you for dead.

— Melissa Kaul





# Freaks



Dave stuck his hand under Punky's nose.

"Beer!" he commanded, glancing back at his friend's over-inflated face through the rear view mirror to make sure he was getting a response.

"Me too!" said Tim, adding a belch for emphasis as he cranked the passenger side window down and gave his freshly drained beer a pitch in the general direction of the ditch.

Punky strained for the desired beverages, and after noticing that there were only four cans left, he stashed two of them for himself under his coat before passing the remainders up into the front seat.

"All right!" Dave sang out as he felt the cold brew make contact with his outstretched hand.

Tim grabbed his offering and belched in appreciation. He popped open the beer and stuck a cigarette in his mouth. Both actions were those of a relaxed and satisfied man. He scratched at his armpit before lighting the smoke with the new plastic Bic he had bought the day before when he cashed his paycheck at the supermarket.

Punky leaned forward, grabbing the front headrests and pulling to help counter the effect of gravity and his enormous belly. He eventually got his head into the front seat area.

"I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but as of right now we are out of beer."

"No fucking way, dude," Dave was outraged. "We just bought that mother fucking twelve-pack half an hour ago."

Punky held up the empty sack as evidence, arching his eyebrows at the still vehement driver. Tim cocked his head, deep in mental contemplation. He was trying to remember if he was on his second or third dose.

"This is only my third can!" Dave was still pissed. "I swear you drink three fucking cans for every one we drink!"

No shit, Tim thought, giving a slight nod in silent agreement. Tim was a mellow dude, didn't like to make waves. He took a quick sip of his beer, attempting to fend off the nasty vibes.

"No fucking way," spouted Dave once more before turning up the stereo and pressing the accelerator a half-inch closer to the floor.

Punky used this sudden increase of volume to crack open one of his prized stowaways.

"Fuck this." Dave slowed down and turned onto a gravel road that lead back to town. "What time is it?" he griped, glancing at Tim.

Tim peered at his watch for a moment before making an announcement.

"5:30."

"5:30? Cool, let's go to the bar, we can make it for the 6:00 happy hour. Two for the price of one," he added, shooting a glance at Punky's form in the back seat.

Punky narrowed his eyes and stared at the back of Dave's head for a few moments, trying to feel hurt. He soon gave up this venture and began to gaze out the window. The sky was grey and the country looked cold and unfriendly.

Tim raised his beer and gave it a jiggle. Bummer. Only a few chugs left. Eying the speedometer, he noticed they were doing about seventy. At this rate they would be perched on barstools in about five minutes. His thoughts were interrupted as he heard Dave say

"something..something..LIGHTER?" Dave was mimicking the flicking process with his right hand and looking at him in anticipation, an unlit cigarette planted in the corner of his mouth.

"Lighter?" Tim asked.

Dave nodded in slow motion. Twice.

Tim held up his Bic and Dave plucked it out of his hand. As Dave was lighting his cigarette, Tim realized that he looked like a cigar smoking chimp he had seen in an old movie. Or was it a postcard? A matchbook? He wondered.

Dave started coughing and gagging after a few puffs off the smoke. He pounded his chest, and after a number of meaty thumps his breathing returned to normal. He rolled down the window and hacked out a few ripe selections.



While this was happening, Tim thought he heard a metallic cracking sound coming from the backseat. He looked back and Punky was busy staring out the window. He decided not to think about it.

Dave laid on the brakes.

"What the hell?" he half-screamed, half-sobbed, his body braced behind the wheel. The car scratched to a stop.

Tim and Punky both peered forward. Sprawled out across the road, about twenty-five feet in front of the car, was a huge fur-covered animal. It sort of looked like a deer, it had antlers, and it had the physical symmetry of a deer, but there was something ungodly strange about it. This -deer-? besides being at least three times the size of a healthy full-grown buck, was green, with gold polka-dots.

They got out of the car and slowly crept towards the still form. The surrounding country was totally silent as they carefully made their way up to the thing for a closer look. The hair on Tim's head was tingling with energy.

Man, whatever it is "WAS" it sure as hell looks dead now! Dave began jogging towards it. "This hide might be worth a bundle!"

They watched as he slid to a stop in front of it. Dave drew back his leg and booted the freakish carcass, as if trying to convince himself that it was real. After a flurry of pokes and kicks, he stood over the thing, swearing in amazement.

"Holy fucking shit, this goddamn beast is unreal!"

Tim felt totally wired, his whole body was buzzing. Looking up, he noticed that the sun had found a thin spot in the otherwise uniform battleship grey of the sky. A single dullish beam of hazy light drifted down over the scene. Tim's gaze dragged back to the thing.

As if energized by the gentle illumination of the sky, the beast suddenly righted itself and lifted its massive head. Dave gave a hoarse shriek, spun a one-eighty and sprinted towards the car, cussing in terror. Punky was making painful wheezing noises and backing away quickly, his arms whirling in a frantic backstroke.

Tim felt cemented to the spot. The creature was now on its feet, towering above the gaping human rooted before it. The thing was still for a moment, then tossed its horned head to the side and looked directly at Dave. It studied him for a moment before

suddenly leaping off the road. It disappeared without a sound.

Tim heard the car engine revving. He stared in the direction of the thing's lightening departure for a long moment before heading towards the waiting car.

In a matter of minutes they had reached the city limits.

"Hey, toss out the empties before we get into town." Dave was always a careful driver. No one made a motion. Dave was quiet for a moment before snapping, "All right, just stuff them under the seat, I'll throw them in the trash when we get to the bar."

"You can drop me off at home," Punky said, "I guess I've had enough excitement. Here man, do you want the rest of this?" He hoisted a half-full can of beer in front of Dave.

"Thanks, dude!" Dave swallowed the contents in one gulp. "Phew, I was dying." Punky just looked at him.

Tim spoke for the first time since they had stopped. "You can drop me off at Punky's, I'll walk home from there."

"You too? What's up, man? Don't you want to tell people about that fucking monster we saw? What's wrong with you?"

"Nothing, just tired."

"All right man, have it your way." Dave drove to Punky's in a steamed silence. He pulled up to the house.

"See ya man, maybe I'll give you a ring later on or something."

Tim and Punky crawled out and watched Dave put the car in gear and head towards the bar.

"Well, I'm going inside. Want to stop in?"

Tim never answered, so Punky ambled up the walk, turning at the front door to see if his friend was following. He looked around and saw Tim a half block away, walking east.

"Man, his apartment is a mile in the other direction," Punky muttered to himself. "Christ, Tim is really weird sometimes."

Punky glanced at him once more before going inside to see what he could find in the refrigerator.

□ Brian Bargmann



## Phantasmagoria

(6Pax)

*Sing a song of six-packs,  
of vodka, beer and fuzzy navel.  
Champagne glasses to the fireplace borne.  
The neighbors complain,  
then join in themselves.  
(Here, try some of this.)  
Spinning room.  
(Who was it I just called?)  
And what time is it anyway?  
(Oh my god, I did what?)  
Little more of this,  
mixed with a little less of that.  
Learn a new word: phantasmagoria.  
(Hey, don't bogart that, man.)  
Mad dash upstairs.  
Twenty-five bucks at Bill's Saloon  
spatters into the porcelain god.  
Party Time just ended, boys and girls.*

— W.A. Seaver

## Hint no. 23

*When you find yourself  
mired in an endless  
fucking gob of fruitcake  
just smile, grit your teeth  
and chew your way out.*

— Stephen Bell

## Burning Pockets

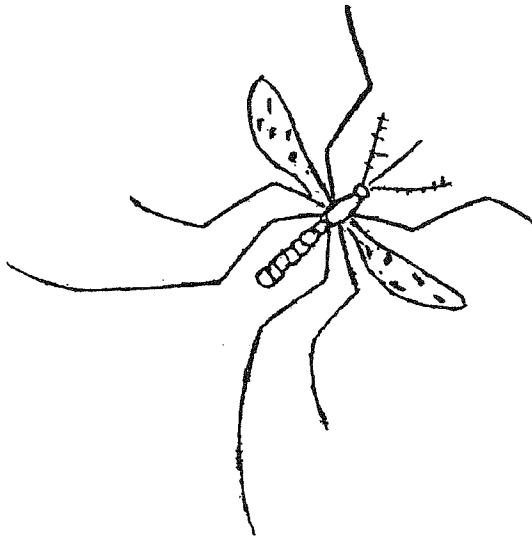
*Hot little coins,  
Silver and Gold  
Drive me to want;  
My heart turns cold.*

— Nancy Winker

## Craps

*The bandito in Las Vegas  
stands and smokes by the slots,  
watching the women come and go  
(speaking of Michaelangelo),  
Knowing tonight'll be his night  
(unlike yesterday and the day before).  
He ogles their breasts  
and says  
Hey, babe, y'here all alone?  
But by midnight  
he still stands by the slots,  
making love to just a cigarette butt.*

— W. A. Seaver



## IF I HAD A FIRECRACKER

*If I had a firecracker  
I'd set it off  
on the Fourth of July  
and Blow Lucille 12 miles High  
so she wouldn't come down  
till the next Fourth of July  
Then I'd do it again.*

— Danny Freewaldt

## Shit

*I'd rather have  
a glass of wine  
than a crock of shit*

— Stephen Bell

## BREAKFAST

*I AWOKE THE OVERPOWERING AROMA  
OF A HUMAN BICEP  
FRYING ON THE GRIDDLE  
SNAP - POP - FRY  
DROOL DAMPENING  
MY DRY MOUTH I  
WONDER WHEN IT WILL BE DONE  
SUDDENLY THROUGH A SLEEPY GROG  
I REALIZE  
MY LEFT ARM IS NOW A BANDAGED STUMP*

— Stephen Bell

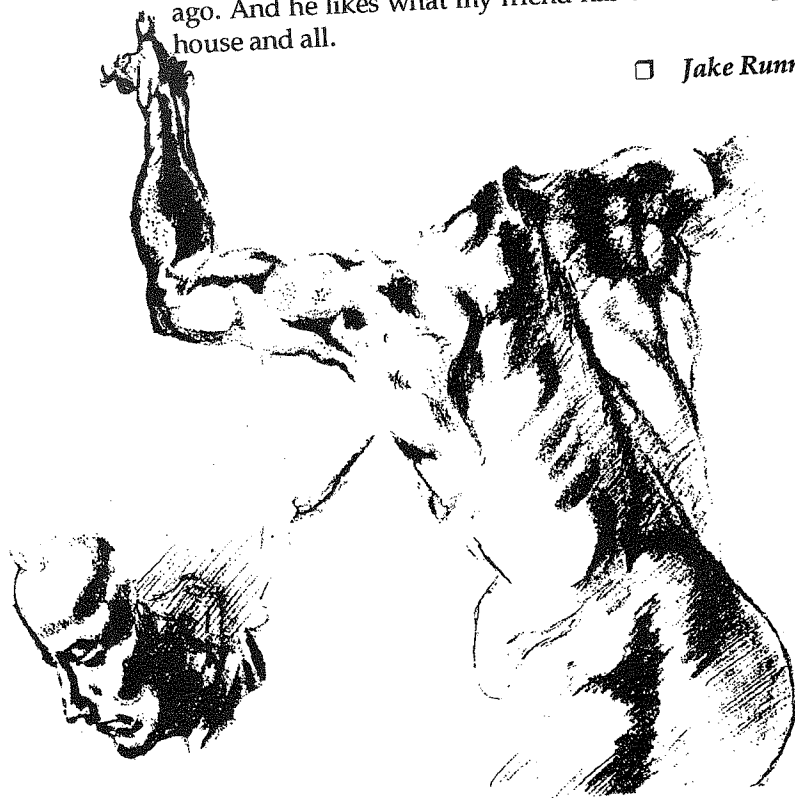


**S**o I'm sitting in class the other day and this dude comes in and sits down, and like he has no fucking head. I mean the fucker doesn't have a head; just this stump with a piece of bone sticking out. And he just nonchalantly walks in, sits down, and starts pulling out his notebook and stuff for class. The teacher comes in and doesn't even notice the man, just walks up to the podium and starts lecturing.

Well things are going along, teachers teaching, this guy with no head is taking notes, nobody's sitting near this guy. The teacher asks a question, nobody answers, he waits, then this guy with no head raises his hand. The teacher looks at him for a second, kind of hesitant, then points to him. He lowers his hand, he neck kind of undulates, and this weird kind of buzzing noise comes out. After about 20 seconds it stops and he just sits there. Well, the teacher hesitates again and says "Good answer." I'm going to myself, "What the fuck!" But he just keeps on going, like there was nothing unusual. Weirdest thing I've ever seen man.

'Til next week when this Centaur shows up at my friend's housewarming party and says he used to live there about 18,000 years ago. And he likes what my friend has done to the place, built a house and all.

□ *Jake Runnalls*







## Tourist

*Driving down Hennepin  
gooseneckin'*

*A little black boy*

*flips me off*

*and sticks out his tongue.*

*—tickled—*

*I daydream about giving him a dollar.*

*(A minute later I'm a mile away.)*

— Brian Bargmann

## Infamous Dialogue

*Just because you have a pen and a piece of paper does that make you a  
writer? You're darn tootin' it does*

*Separation of church and state?*

*HA HA HA what a joke.*

*In god we trust*

*white rich christians*

*are the government.*

— Stephen Bell

## RACIST

*NIGGER, HONKY, GOOK*

*Radical words against one's color*

*NIGGER, HONKY, GOOK*

*Slang words with no meaning, just to hurt someone*

*NIGGER, HONKY, GOOK*

*A cry for help, for being jealous of one's race*

*NIGGER, HONKY, GOOK*

*When will it all end...?*

*The hate we feel towards each other*

*Death to all....is that our only solution?*

— Xavier Johnson



## Humpty Dumpty's Sad Demise

Humpty Dumpty sang on "The Wall"  
With John, George, Ringo and Paul.  
But the CIA and FBI  
Rubbed that Humpty out, poor guy!  
His speech was subversive, his thoughts were obscene;  
Our children would never stay healthy and clean!  
So they came in their shades, wingtips and suits  
And made H. Dumpty go "ker-sploot!"  
They cleaned up the mess, they washed off the walk,  
And when came the press, they started to balk.  
It's all a matter, can't you see,  
of protecting our National Security.  
We won't say nothin'. You can't make us talk.  
So kindly ignore that outline in chalk.  
But one man persisted, and finally broke through,  
And discovered the feds had conned me and you.  
He found out who all had committed the crime:  
Half of the government should be doing time!  
But he disappeared. They took him away  
and put him somewhere cold, dark and grey.  
Lobotomized now, he stares into space,  
And leaves us the ones with yolk on our face.

— W.A. Seaver



## an inarticulate mother...

making the world a better place to live  
in  
busy busy busy  
my that was a deep one  
wasn't it?  
happy happy joy joy  
I want blue oatmeal  
rubbish  
my kellog's rice krispies are talking  
to me  
us big people burning hot flesh  
who would've thunk it?  
ha-ha another lie  
fuck 'em let them get real jobs

— Stephen Bell

## STARED AT BY CATS

A-HA A NEW WEAPON OF DESTRUCTION  
EXTREMELY MELLOW AND STRANGE  
HUNGRILY EATING  
CHOMP-CHEW-GRIND  
A MOUTHFUL  
OF MUSHY-ORANGE  
CARROTS  
-an enormous gaping hole in reality-  
-who knows what it is?

— Stephen Bell



## that's entertainment

-pop-stew-fry-keep those brains a cookin'  
keep them right at home  
nestled in their brain-pan keep those  
brains a cookin'  
-keep the blood-  
-flowing-  
-through-  
that wrinkled fuckin' gray mass-  
peel your eyes like onions  
fry your flesh with wine  
four yelling freaks run into the street  
naked-  
jubilant and alive

— Stephen Bell



## Providence: captured fragment

*In the darkened days  
beside the cracked,  
dilapidated bridge,  
fourteen sirens wail  
in providential expectation  
of things not to come.*

*Someday...  
(providence.)  
Someday...  
(perestroika.)  
Someday...  
(lace in the candleflame  
engulfing.)*

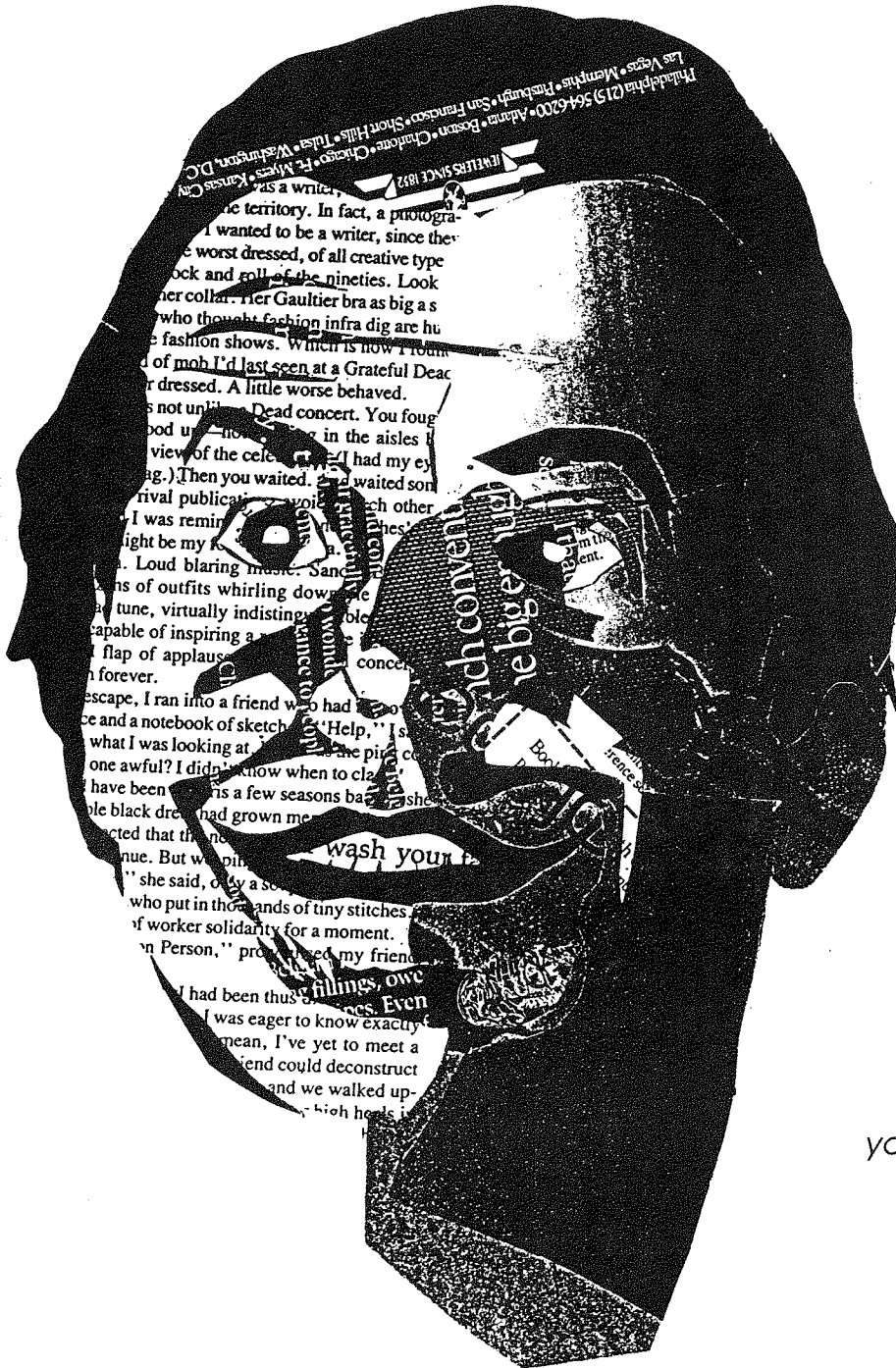
*A portent figure stares from the  
window:  
flood to come Twelveday,  
riding wings of broken dreams,  
Day-by-day re-enactment  
while ballerinas twirl.  
Engulfed by the flood.*

*Someday...  
(flood.)  
Someday...  
(perestroika.)  
Someday...  
(minds in the mill  
producing.)*

*Party days end in ignorant dust,  
returned to the Village.  
Forty-three men working the rail;  
one to die.  
Hot metal, grinding wheel  
forces the day through like sausage.*

*Someday...  
(dust.)  
Someday...  
(perestroika.)  
Someday...  
(reflections in the water  
dancing.)*

— W.A. Seaver



## Ha-Ha

Life is like being tickled  
 -It's fun at first-  
 but after awhile  
 you cry and piss your pants.  
 -That's when it is real-  
 The cement hardens  
 a soul has been cast  
 -Trembling-  
 for a time  
 before  
 it hardens  
 Tickled stiff.

— Brian Bargmann



## Response to Anne Sexton

*a bit of pot  
turns into a lot—  
a little coke?  
that's a joke!  
a couple beaners  
then it's ten—  
gotta come down,  
valium again...  
The haze never leaves  
you just pretend it does—  
When the maxim subsides,  
you find another buzz—  
The hurt  
and anger  
in the children's eyes—  
not even that  
stops the pursuit  
of the high...  
Reality?  
not—  
spirituality?  
rot—  
rotting rotting scheming plotting  
dammit...  
There is no truth for prisoner of youth—  
troubled teen in roll of adult—  
a drug is a drug—  
abusive assault.  
— Brenda Grimm*



## Firestorm

I knew a couple guys in high school.  
They knew wine and women and fists and cars,  
and not really a lot much else.  
The years went by, and I forgot them;  
never thought they'd be anyone.  
But the other day, I found a bit  
tucked in the back  
of the New York-Dresden Times.  
A small bit—a filler bit  
about these very same two guys.  
Seems they'd found their niche—their solution—  
in a double-wife ceremony,  
wearing matching black bow ties.  
(You know I had to look 'em up).

They make honest beer and Lord Calvert money now;  
spit between their teeth like pros,  
and ennoble women's lowers,  
where they work days as twelve-hour grease boys  
at an auto shop in Dresden.  
They can feel the firestorm coming,  
burning all around them;  
burning up their insides.  
They lurch home, flaming, at 2 A.M.  
and pass it on to their wives.  
They say, "Honey, honey, why don't you ever respect me?  
Why do you curse and swear and scream and yell  
when I'm beating you 'round the brains?"  
They say, "Someday, I'm gonna get out of this rut,  
but what will I know to do?"  
So they drink their beer and spit like pros  
and ennoble women's lowers.

Today I saw a bit—a filler bit—  
in the New York-Dresden Times.  
Seems they found their niche—found their solution—  
and burned out at the very same time.

— W.A. Seaver



## **Stupid Mask**

*From the day I was meshed by the form of rules,  
And honed into a number by educational tools,  
I look for the sun; I wish I could bask,  
But it is obscured by my Stupid Mask.*

*Among the peers that gage the mold,  
And the scowling mouths, "Do what you're told!"  
What bitter bile found in that flask  
When passed over the pallet of my Stupid Mask.*

*There's chains that bind even the Heavenly Host,  
From a farther sun; a Holy Ghost,  
And the prayers you spew and the favors you ask  
Fall on the deaf ears of a Stupid Mask.*

*So back to the stone, you sleeping fool,  
For there are tools making tools that make more tools,  
And if you finish that particular task  
You can start on another Stupid Mask.*

— Steve Holbeck

## **Cut Loose**

*Wires dangle twisting curling  
Ragged severed ends...  
The puppet lies below  
Free and forsaken  
All limp atrophied muscles  
Reliving the fear of falling  
Tumbling through emptiness  
To the hard featureless  
Flat and barren surface  
That real people call  
Reality...*

— Vola Kollmar





## SILENCE

*Have you ever heard the silence?  
The deafening sound of nothing.  
That icy, hollow, vacant sound.  
Sometimes peaceful, sometimes oppressive.*

*Have you ever heard the silence?  
Amid a crowd,  
That empty nothing, throbbing in your brain.  
While the pandemonium of the crowd envelops you.*

*Have you ever heard the silence?  
Yanking at your ears,  
Drawing you into space.  
While around you the noise engulfs you.*

— Sarah A. Hock

## Rush Hour

*The sun is warm on melting snow,  
On stubby grass of yellow-faded brown;  
Sunlight glances off my jacket,  
Slides past my face, unnoticed, unperceived.*

*I am going places, going:  
Have to hurry...  
Early, can't be late—  
Hurry in and sit and wait  
Under artificial light,  
A white-glass-and-electric imitation of the sun;  
There is always, always,  
Always too much to be done:*

*One dare not take the time to feel the sun.*

— Vola Kollmar



## Over The Moon

*Goodbye to all my friends.  
The time is coming soon.  
My time with you must end.  
I'm heading over the moon.  
I hear a voice inside,  
That's calling me away.  
This voice I can't deny.  
I must be on my way.  
Please try to understand,  
The reasons I must go.  
Don't try to hold my hand.  
I have to go alone.  
So please don't cry for me.  
I must be leaving soon.  
Again, someday we'll meet,  
Somewhere over the moon.*

— Thomas R. Cummins



