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**SPRING
1966**



FOLIO

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

SPRING 1966

vol. XVIII, no. 2

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PUBLISHED UNDER THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS'
COUNCIL COMMISSIONER FOR PUBLICATIONS: JOHN JUKES

PRINTED BY MIDDLESEX PRINTING COMPANY LIMITED, LONDON, CANADA

Editorial

A student literary magazine should have two objectives. Its first aim should be to encourage student writing, to assist the writer and to provide him with constructive criticism (if asked for). Its second object, and in fact its raison d'être, is the presentation of student writing to the rest of the student body. Thus in effect, the literary magazine provides a medium of communication between the writer and those who choose to read his work.

The active partner in this process of communication is the writer. Although he may argue that he is writing only for his own satisfaction, once the writer has put his thoughts and emotions on paper, they have become public property. This does not suggest that the writer is in any way bound to the public or guided by its opinion; he alone should decide what and how he will write. However, by the very act of writing, the author has become involved in the essential process of communication, and thus has a responsibility to make his work comprehensible to his audience. One criticism often levelled at student writing is that it loses sight of this process of communication, that it is so clouded with obscurities as to be intelligible only to its creator. Unfortunately this charge is often justified, as so often the student writer feels that he has obtained ultimate insight into sex, death, or interracial conflict, subjects which even the most experienced writers find difficult to handle. The student is often still groping for his own personal solution to these problems, and this emotional conflict is evident in his writing. It is refreshing to observe that at least some of the writers represented in this issue of Folio have been able to show a more detached attitude, both in subject and style, indicated by a note of humour in their prose or a more relaxed, lyrical quality in their verse. However, whatever its merits or defects, most student writing does show at least an attempt to deal honestly with the subject at hand.

To expect every reader to comprehend every piece of writing or art in the magazine would be unrealistic. Cultural taste is determined by the individual's particular experiences and outlook on life; this necessarily varies from person to person. However the reader should at least attempt in each case to evaluate and criticize what he reads; this is both his prerogative and his responsibility. Too often the only response evoked is simply "I don't understand!" If writing is to have any significance for its audience, it must be understood — this does not imply that it should be trite or mediocre. For the reader as well as the writer has a duty to fulfill; the writer must attempt to communicate, but the reader must learn to read. And the reader must remember that, even if he thinks the writing incomprehensible or insignificant, the student writer is speaking not only for himself, but for those who are silent as well.

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THE HARDER THE WORSE

If you think you've seen everything, you ought to have been standing out across from Willard's grocery the day those two fellows disappeared right where they stood. It was a bit foggy that morning and all, but you could easily see that they just weren't there any more. The folks who were watching are still talking about how mysterious it was, and even now there are some who refuse to believe what happened. Nevertheless, the really important thing was the recovery of the money.

I was over at Oklahoma State finishing up my last year of history courses, when I met Fran Kendal at a weekend seminar they were holding to discuss civics. She was a sophomore taking an option on government and kind of hated the whole thing, but showed up at this seminar to convince herself that she could become interested. While she was grinning and bearing it, I came along and we got to talking and first thing you know we were at a party later on in the evening. I can spare you the details, but we got on pretty well. In fact, we got pinned soon afterwards, and before I graduated in the spring we got engaged.

Now, at that time there was a lecturer at the University named Al Keyes, a young and creative chap who taught chemistry in liberal arts courses. He had been stereotyped by his colleagues as the local mad chemist, always tinkering with his junk in the lab. I got to meet him there when Fran was waiting for me after a lecture. I walked in when he was telling her about this idea he had of some dry hydrogen compound that could work even on sand to mix with the oxygen and produce water. It was a possibility for opening up parts of our Dust Bowl and so on; you know how an enthusiast can talk about pet projects. Until that moment my interest in chemistry had been negligible, but Al Keyes' ideas were unusual and he put them across with such verve that you couldn't help absorbing them. Frequently I would trot over to see how Al was getting on with his schemes. He was actually pleased that I took an interest in his ideas; apparently not very many people had given them any serious value.

I should point out that Al Keyes was a nervous-appearing individual. He was always scratching his head or adjusting his glasses, or most often biting unconsciously at his fingers. There was at least some basis for his habits; he said once, "Will, I hope you appreciate that some of my experiments are for purposes of discovering something that will bring cash. Frankly, I need more money than this job pays right now. I've still got a few debts." He admitted being anxious about these money problems, but, as I said, his reactions were absent-minded and hard to correct. "However," he assured me, "I'm working on a possible way of frustrating my finger-chewing habit. I guess I'm just ashamed enough of it to want to come up with something."

Near the end of the term I was wrapped up with my book work, and with Fran, so I didn't visit Al's lab more than a couple of times, the latter of which was to say good-bye. "I'll be looking for reports of your discoveries in the paper," I told him, and left. In May, Fran's folks invited me to stay with them for a time, and after the last end-of-term bash, she and I drove over to Osgood, her home town. Fran's father owned Grain World, one of the largest feed supply stores in the northeast part of the state, and she sometimes worked there when she went home. Since my own permanent job was to start in Oklahoma City in a month, it seemed reasonable to accept the offer to stay with the family for a while. They turned out to be fine considerate folks. Mr. Kendal even offered me a job in the store, but since Fran had decided not to work during my stay, I said thanks anyway.

It was shaping up to be a casual summer, but the event I'm leading up to made things exciting for everybody concerned. First of all, the Crier ran a column about a chemistry lecturer at the university who had started out to find a cure for finger-biting, and had wound up with something called Tenazine. This was a chemical which, when swallowed, was supposed to harden the finger skin and underlying flesh, enough so that actual piercing was impossible. Further uses were unforeseen for the medical world, in the healing or prevention of all bodily wounds. More work was necessary before the FDA would license for mass production, etc.

Three days later, another article reported the destruction of a number of supplies and theft of some chemicals from the same laboratory that had been the scene of the significant discovery the previous week. The inventor, an Allen Keyes, was upset at the loss of an amount of Tenazine, with which he had been planning to make further tests.

I felt it was about time to call anyway, so I phoned Al that evening and asked him how bad the situation was. "Well, it depends on what the vandal had in mind," he began. "The report about my Tenazine went a bit overboard, and I suspect it triggered his imagination. Possibly he's contemplating a break-and-enter and wants to avoid getting glass cuts and assorted injuries." I pursued the point. "Is the stuff really able to give that kind of protection?"

"Immunity could be even total," he conceded, with some agitation, "but what I'm concerned about is that the stolen Tenazine was undiluted. It doesn't keep its properties well for very long after dilution, so the mixing is done just before use. And the concentration of the stolen stuff was higher than I've ever had it. I'd be scared as hell to try to consume it as it is — anything could happen." I expressed suitable sympathy at the frustration of his laborious efforts, and hung up.

A few days later, there was a big commotion in Osgood. After it was over, we even had the sheriff come by to ask a few questions

about Al. I'll tell you how it started, the way Les Madie told us. He is a friend and customer of Fran's dad, and has a farm outside of town — near the Kendal's, as a matter of fact. Les had gone into a branch of Northeastern Trust to deposit his weekly money, and was at the far end of the floor filling out a deposit slip. "These two fellers came in together, you know, they even opened up the double doors at the same time and walked in aside each other," said Les, still a bit shaky afterwards, "but they moved kind of strange — stiff, like they'd been ridin' a horse all day. They looked funny too, their faces and hands was not the right colour, maybe a bit lighter and with this crazy reflection like the sun on snow. Well, they stop and look around and there's only two clerks in them little cages and only a few people in the bank. I suspicioned this pair had something rotten in mind — you could just calculate it from watchin' them. They didn't say nothin' to the customers right off; I figured they was in a hurry even if they didn't look it. Well, they each walk over to one of the cashiers. One of them hulks shouts out in a real awful voice like a hay baler that ain't had oil for a year, 'Now listen up; we both got real guns pointed at these pretty little women here, and they are gonna give us all the money they got without pressin' any alarm, or else we're gonna do some pressin' of our own on these triggers!' "

Les was getting more and more heated all this time, and since he was fairly scared during the holdup, I imagine he had good reason to be excited. How the whole incident ended is as follows. The men managed to keep everyone at bay long enough to get out the doors with four full money sacks. Funny thing was, their movements were opposite to what you might have expected: they seemed to be traveling more slowly and more stiffly all the time.

After they were out of sight, one of the tellers recovered her wits and pressed the red button that was wired to set off the alarm over at Sheriff Wilson's office. Out on the street, the robbers were loping jerkily away from the bank. Deputy Benton was the only one in the office at the time, since the sheriff had taken Frank Uttley over to the hospital to see about sewing on a fingertip that Frank had somehow got cut off.

Well, Benton runs outside and whips around the corner to Chesney Street where the bank is, and sure enough, there are the two men up farther. Fortunately there are no more than four or five passersby in sight, and Benton yells at them to take cover across the street. All this hasn't taken more than thirty seconds. Benton now calls out, "Hey you two! Hold it right there!" and fires in the air. Both men wheel and fire back in his direction. One bullet hits a parking meter and whistles off at an angle. More slowly, desparately, the two men attempt to take up speed to get around the corner.

But Benton has been taking careful aim. Just as the men pass

Willard's store, he fires twice. And it happens. The pair have disappeared. Or dropped through the sidewalk.

Neither the deputy nor the folks huddled tensely across the street can believe their eyes.

Later on, when Al Keyes had raced into Osgood to look over the scene, he came to a grim conclusion. "They drank my Tenazine all right. Except, too much of it. And it was a tremendously strong mixture to begin with." Al bent down over the clothes of the two crooks now lying on the sidewalk like laundry. He poked his fingers into an empty shirt and sifted a pile of pink-white gravelly stuff. "They had calculated that an overdose of Tenazine would protect them against any injury, particularly bullet wounds. Too bad it hardened not just their skin but their entire bodies. When the bullets hit them, they just shattered like glass." Al Keyes smiled, scratched his head, and concluded, "Such is the fate of hardened criminals."

—Bob Forrest

The Bull Ring, Birmingham

(Which is the centre of that labyrinth.)

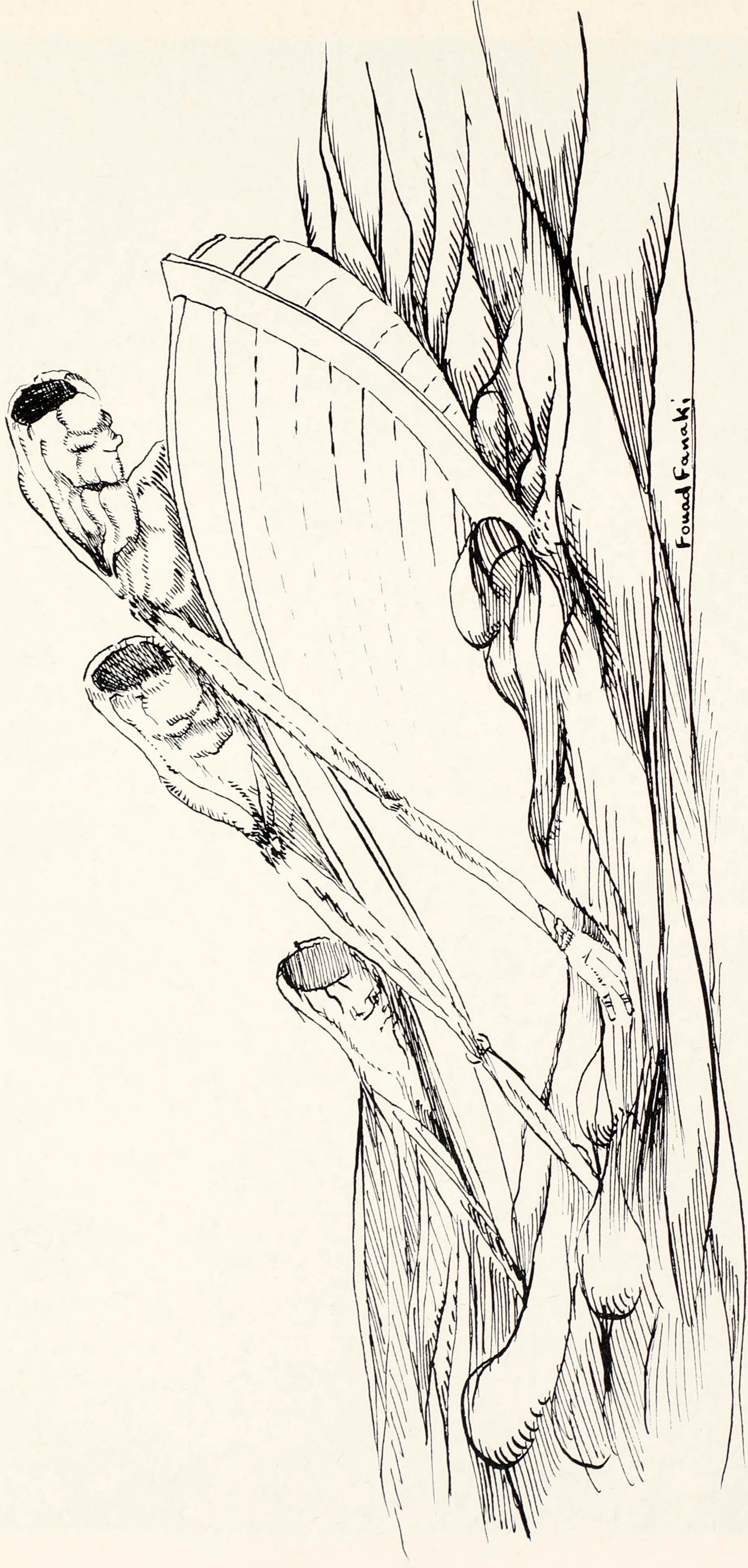
Few visitors come here to gaze
Or seek a Minotaur,
At the centre of this maze,
And Minos only judges Midas in this town,
Though I'm afraid the golden touch
Buys grotty goods round here.

Admittedly the grimy, cobbled immediately Post-War
Has changed its aspect to a flashier
More modern looking whore—
But Pasiphae could hardly fall for this.

Indeed the coldly calculated buildings seem
The issue of a session when
A raving architect, encouched and analysed,
Spewed out his dream,
Or if not so, it must have been
A diabolic Dedalus that built this labyrinth.

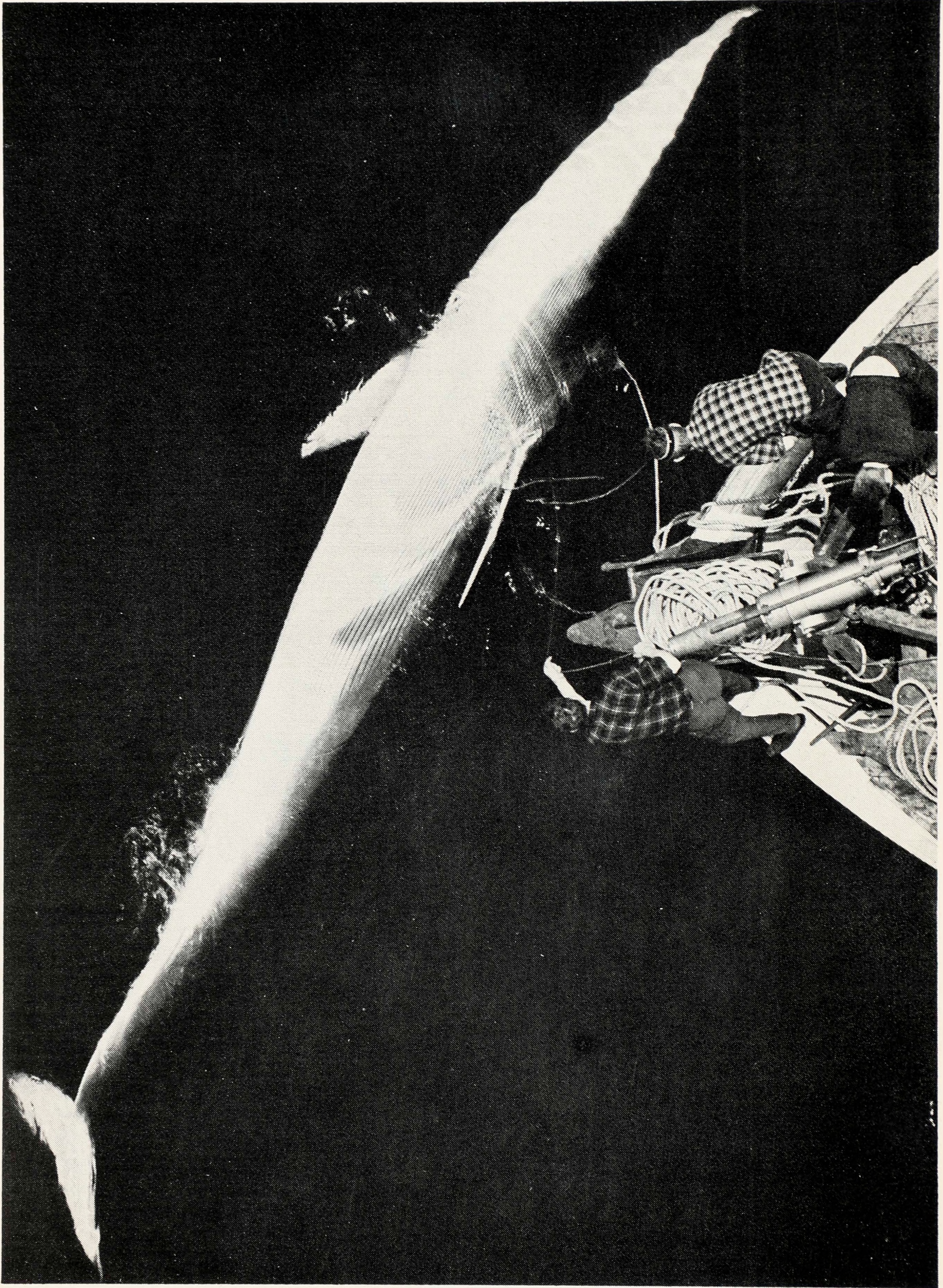
Hardly the aesthete's cup of tea, you'd say,
Or a pleasant prospect for those,
Who shiver in disgust,
When they survey in full
Our city's lust
For industry's old bull.

—John Ferns



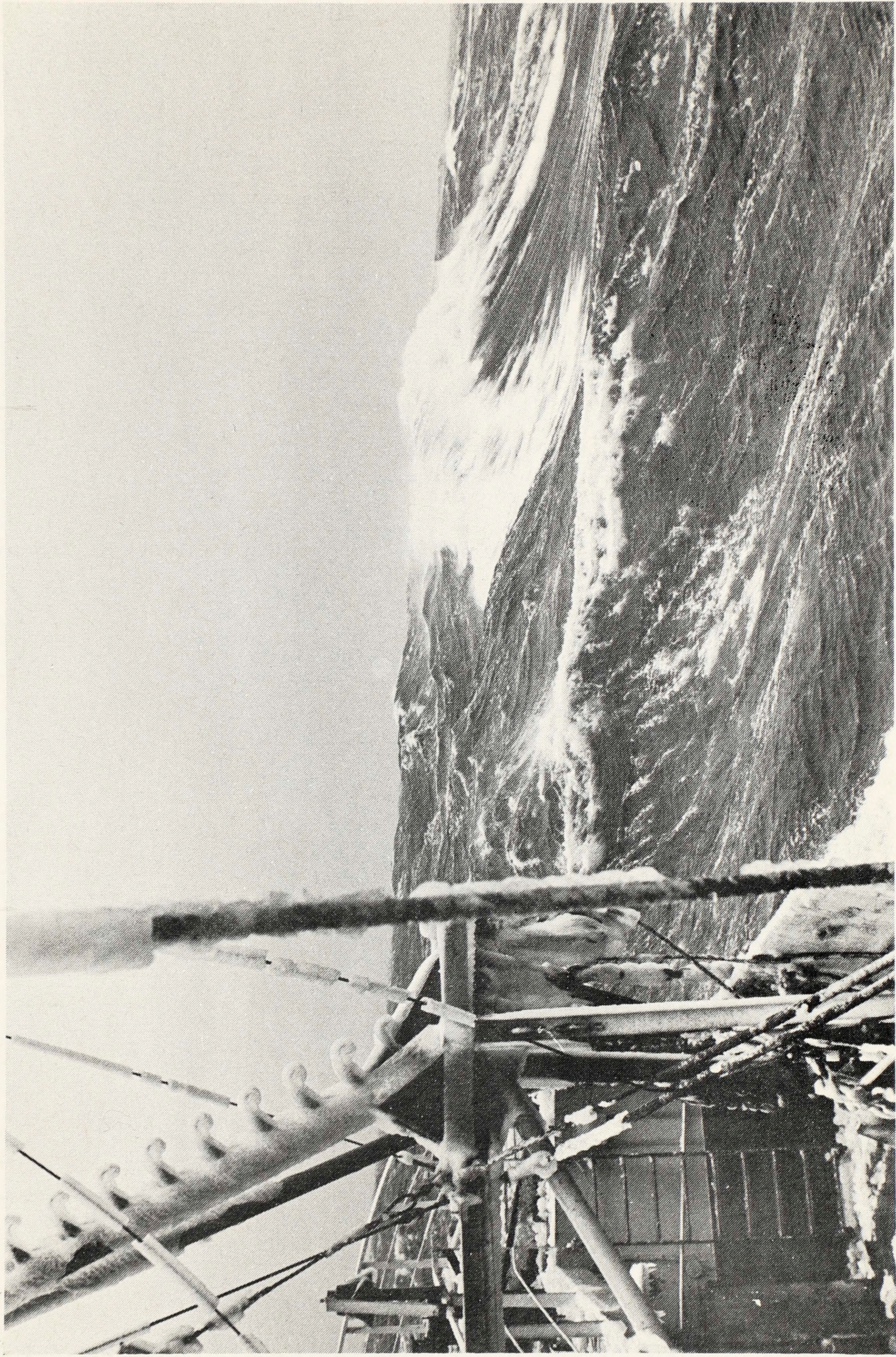
"The Procession"

—Fouad Fanaki



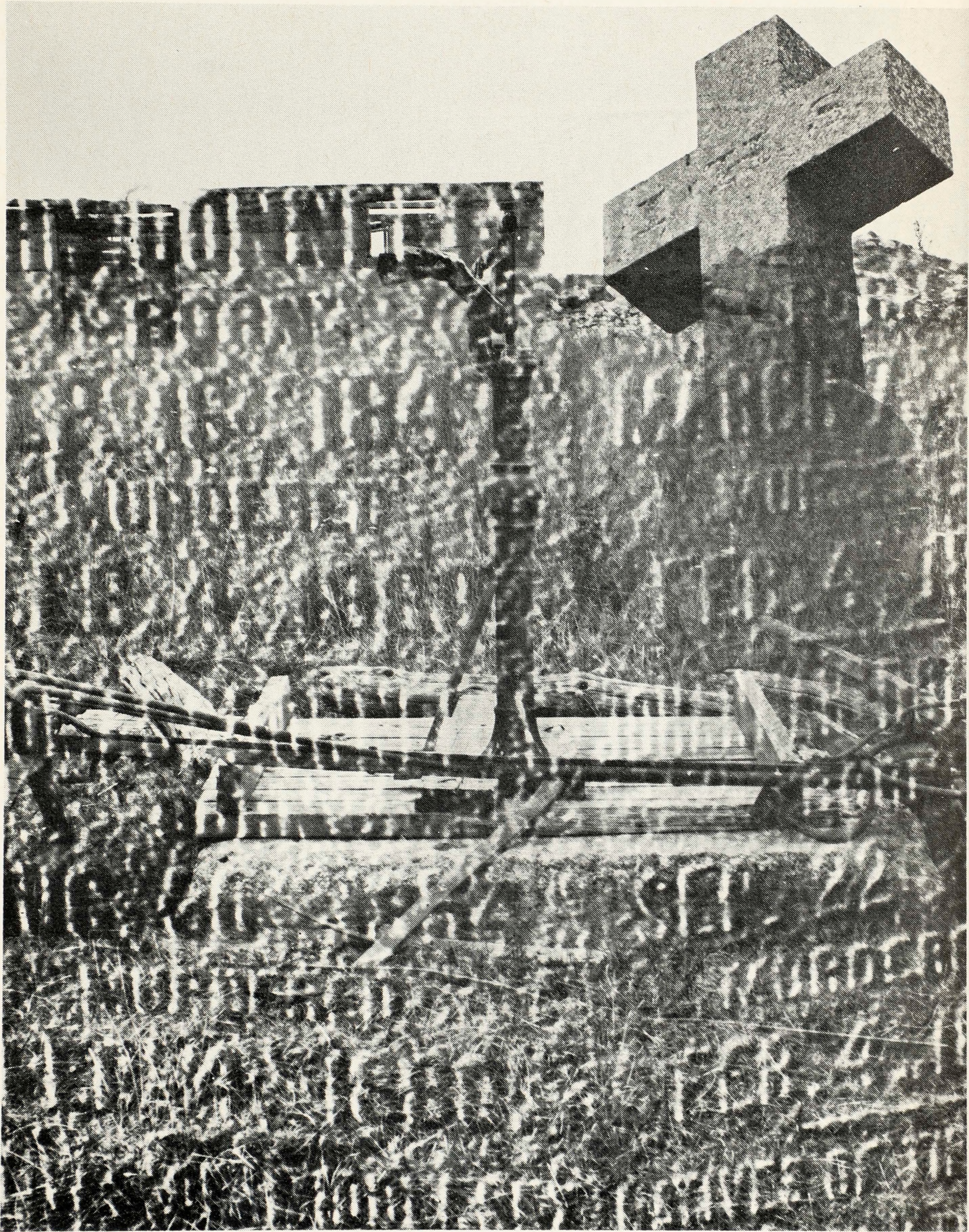
"Fin Back Whale"

—C. D. Grant



"The North Atlantic"

—C. D. Grant



—Ralph Willsey

Two Poems by John Ferns

Death in New York

To Dylan Thomas

Over the sky-scraper cliffs
In the twinkling neon-night
A hawk calls out to you—
Whiskied under and dying,
Old rhyming dad—
With death's love-glint in its eyes,
Though cruelly razor-billed,
"Dylan, Dylan
Come and be killed."

Thousands criss-cross Times Square,
And America stares.

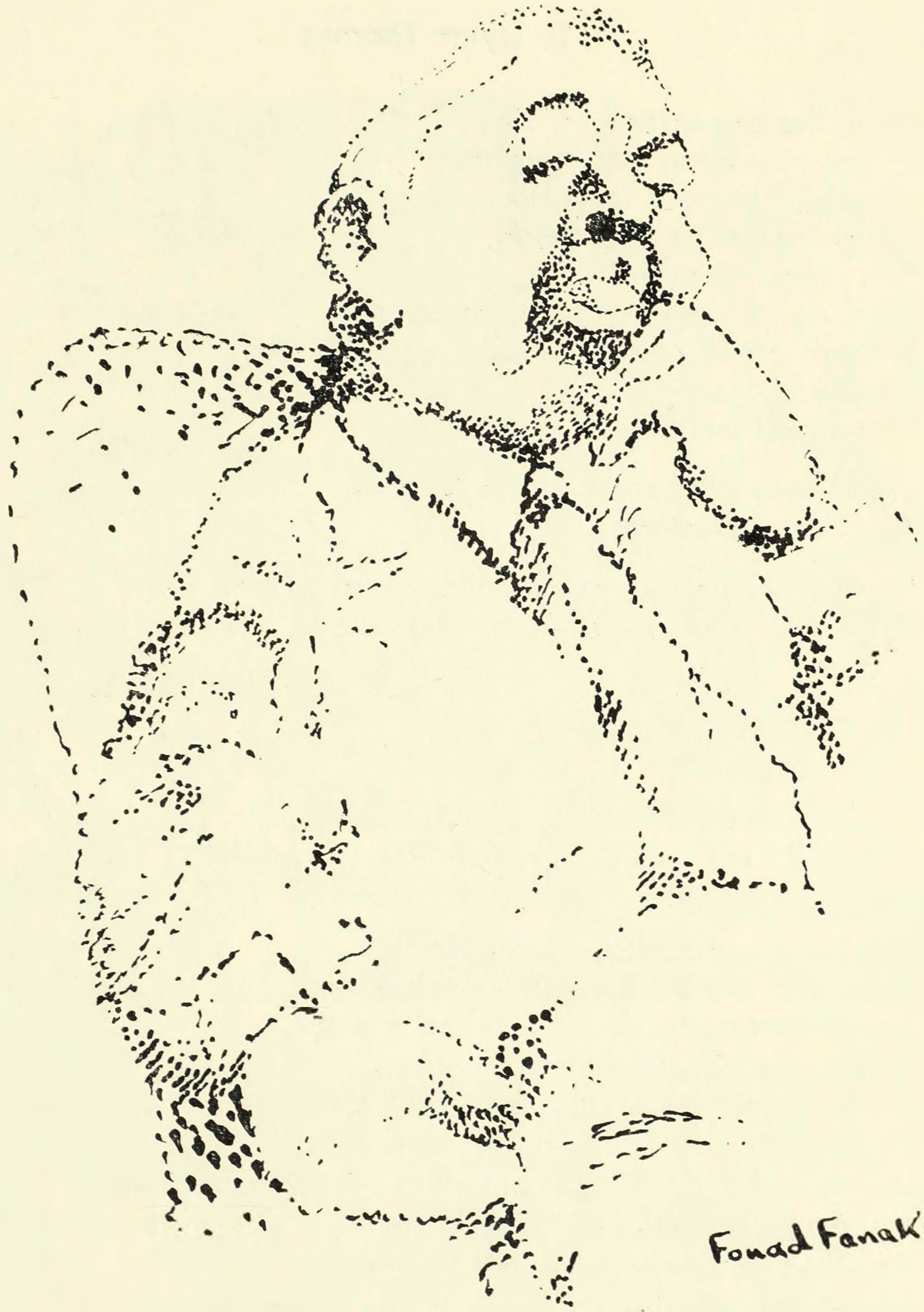
Thirteen years old, not having heard of you yet,
Mom flicks out my bedroom light, and I sleep.

—John Ferns

Scop at the Modern Mead-Hall

The bard befuddled by his drink,
Dissolved the party with a verbal stink,
You'd almost think he'd bared his ass,
Before the Canadian middle-class,
For ivory smiles soon shiver into stares
As still the drunkard vilifies and glares.
He soils the drawing-room with "Blood and Sweat"
And upsets every cosy tête à tête:
The hostess sensing that all isn't right,
Opens the window to consult the night,
Hoping the summer wind might clear,
A room distracted by a poet's sneer.
Madam, open the door—go on, call in a skunk,
But be sure to lock the poet out. He's drunk.

—John Ferns



THE MOTHER

I

It was early January. A thin layer of snow stretched over the black tiled roofs of the misty-coloured brick houses, and was slowly turning grey from the factory smoke. Snow that had collected in the gutters slipped towards the glistening grill of a drain and began to evaporate. In a yard behind the houses a row of baby's nappies hung lankly from a clothes' line. One of them had fallen and lay sodden in a puddle in the cobbled yard.

II

Yellow ashes lay in the kitchen grate and the broken linoleum was stained with patches of grease and dried mud. A baby cried sporadically from his cot while his brother and sister crouched near the hearth over a scratched Dinky car and an armless doll. The girl, a child of four, was thin and pale and shivered in her flimsy nightgown: the boy, a year older, pushed his car determinedly across the linoleum. Their father's tea cup stood empty on the table surrounded by a small pool of slops. Crumpled chip papers remained from last night's supper. Outside desultory gusts of sleet shipped against the window. Through the door, which opened directly from the stairs, their mother emerged looking distraught and haggard. The children stared at her as she pushed a hand through her tangled hair. They were frightened and attentive.

"What d'you think you're doin'?" she shouted at the children and then gazed about her seeming to ignore them. The baby gave a spluttering cough, like a sick kitten, and howled. His sister, clutching her doll by the leg, went to peer into the cradle, while the boy, glancing furtively at his mother shuffled aside and hunched himself up in the armchair. The mother still stood with the half-opened door behind her, shaking her head down towards her chest painfully. She tugged aimlessly at the hem of her quilted dressing gown.

"What . . . ? What is it? . . ." she muttered to herself.

"Stop that bleedin' row, stop that bleedin' . . ." She rushed towards the cradle and with a sweep of her arm sent the sister sprawling across the floor. The girl's cries were taken up by the baby.

"Shut it . . . shut it," yelled the mother, distractedly shaking the baby, whose screaming protests finally died in a spasm of coughing. The mother reversed the infant and began hitting its back until its face crimsoned.

"Shut it . . . for bleedin' Christ's sake . . . shut it!" Shoving the baby back into its cradle she descended into the scullery, which was cement-floored and narrow. On the stove a saucepan of bottles sat on an unlit gas ring. A thin film of grease had coagulated on the surface of the water in which the bottles lay. In the sink opposite a number of plastic dishes were piled unevenly in a leaning tower.

The draining board was covered with scraps of Christmas wrapping paper and some pieces of wet cutlery, which were rusting slightly. The mother shook her head several times and half-collapsed against the stove. Tears were streaming down her cheeks. The girl's whimpering subsided in the other room.

On the scullery window sill lay an empty biro and a dummy-nipple, still in its cellophane wrapper. The light bulb in the scullery was dead and fluffs of dust clung to the cord, which suspended it from the ceiling. The mother stood rocking herself slowly against the stove in the grey light from the window.

"Oh my head . . . my bloody head," she keened to herself.

Again the baby began whining and the mother returned furiously to the upper room, plucked it from its cradle, and returned with it to the sink.

"Please . . . please . . . for God's sake." she implored the baby, her face knotted in pain. The baby's nappy was stained and soaking. She untied it with difficulty and laid the child among the Christmas paper on the draining board. The baby's thighs were chapped and scabrous in places, his genitals inflamed and raw-looking. The mother seemed to recover herself and started about in search of a fresh nappy. From the doorway her daughter stared at her pleadingly still trailing her doll behind her.

"Mum . . . kin I 'ave . . . Mom?"

But the woman took no notice of the girl and hurried out into the yard to the clothes' line. All the nappies were cold and soggy. She returned with three of them and looked hopelessly into the empty grate.

"Why yer bleedin' father . . . don't make the fire . . . I bloody well . . ." She glared at her son, who attempted to ignore her. His head was drooped against her chest and he ran his car up and down his stomach rhythmically.

"D'you 'ear me . . .?" She pushed past the girl into the scullery. By this time the baby's bawling had reached an hysterical crescendo as it writhed about on the draining board. The mother grew frantic. She dropped the soaking nappies on the floor and grabbed the child and shook it desperately. Its cries lapsed as it struggled for breath.

"Oh God . . . oh God," the mother sobbed as she clutched the child to her breast, her whole body shivered into a spasm as she rocked rapidly. The baby gasped and broke into a fresh scream. A stream of urine trickled down the mother's dressing gown.

"You little bugger, you . . . you." She held the child off from her at arm's length and glared at it in disgust. Her face contorted with rage, and heaving it towards her, she bit it savagely in the shoulder, then tumbled down beside the stove still clutching the child. The brother and sister stared at her from the doorway. A gust of sleet needled against the scullery window pane.

III

The door between the scullery and the kitchen was closed. Brother and sister stood huddled together on the armchair looking at the rain, which streamed across the yard, then runnelled backwards among the cobbles. The baby, bunched in its blanket, twisted and moaned in uneasy sleep. Its brow was sticky with sweat and its whole face red and blotchy. In the kitchen the mother squatted on a stool between the stove and the sink, her head buried in her lap. Both hands were clutched round the nape of her neck, and she pressed her forehead against her knees. She mumbled and babbled incoherent curses to herself. Suddenly she sat bold upright, twisted her neck round and stared straight up the narrow scullery at the closed door. Her face was ashy white with heavy, black semi-circles under her eyes, which bulged grotesquely, as though she failed totally to comprehend the scratched, bottle-green door before her.

“Who in hell . . . ?” she said. Then the energy drained away from her, and her head tumbled back into her lap again. The cold tap dripped steadily onto the plastic dishes with a relentless rhythm. Again her head heaved forward and she started to her feet. She rushed up the scullery through the room where the children were, and into the front room of the house, which was like a damp mausoleum. She clawed at the bolts and lock of the front door. Eventually they yielded to her frenzied twistings.

She stood outside the door and saw scraps of damp newspaper stretched round the roots of the broken privet hedge in front of the house. The front gate swung back and forth, absurdly hanging on one spring. A flurry of sleet rattled across the roofs. Down the street she saw the hooded canvas of a workmen's shelter, with bricks, tools and earth piled round it. Mustard coloured smoke choked up from the workmen's coke fire and raced away on the wind. As she stood numbed, then shivering, her hair blowing across her face, a man emerged from the shelter and clumped along the street toward her, his boots ringing on the wet pavement. His head was bent forward and his body hunched with cold. A cloth cap was pulled low on his forehead, obscuring his face from view. When he reached her he glanced up. He looked like a gypsy, and his black, oily eyes stared at her contemptuously. His leathery face was weathered, grimy and unshaven. Even as he passed on up the street he continued to look back at her over his shoulder. The black eyes bore deeper and deeper into her mind. Her upper teeth dug into her lower lip as she suppressed a scream. She blinked and her eyes cast about in terror. Staggering backwards she slammed the door behind her and pressed her back against it. Her chin dropped onto her breast. She could still hear the coke fire sizzle and sough in the wind.

IV

The afternoon light receded, like the tide of a winter sea and the sea and the scullery grew darker. The brother and sister were playing on the stairs, the door was slightly open and the shadows deepened in the stair well. In the scullery the mother leaned heavily over the sink, her legs bent and crossed, running a dishcloth abstractedly over the plates and looking blankly through the window at the board fence, which flanked the path from the entry. The fence boards were grey-brown and shiny with rain. Knot-holes and varying coloured grains became horrid shapes and faces.

The baby woke and its initial whimpers slowly rose into a tremulous scream. Dropping her cloth the mother stood rigid before the sink still staring at the fence. Her chest heaved and her teeth began grinding together uncontrollably. The baby's noise fell and rose again, fell then reached a tormental howl. The knots in the fence jumped and leered at the woman. She backed away to the corner of the scullery, her neck bobbing convulsively. Her nails dragged up the rough cement surface of the wall and she broke across the room crashing through the door. With one hand she clawed hold of the baby and raised it above her head and hurled it down towards the hearth. Its skull cracked against the blunt edge of the grate. The baby's legs twitched for a moment. One arm bent over, and it lay still. A piece of red Christmas ribbon was tied tightly round its penis. The ribbon fluttered briefly as a draught curled across the floor from the gaping scullery doorway. At the foot of the stairs the brother and sister stood together in mute horror. Then the sister shrieked and disappeared upstairs, her wild screams echoed above and a bedroom door slammed. The boy stood motionless against the skirting by the stairway door. He watched his mother in terror, as she lurched about drunkenly and finally sank to her knees. Several minutes later she started from her slumped position on the floor and veered towards the armchair. She toppled into it oblivious. Her head lolled to one side and her mouth hung open. Then her tongue jutted back and forth mechanically and slaver dripped down her chin. The boy watched her eyes bulge, and the pupils rush forward and then sink back into her skull.

The boy's gaze was fixed on her as he gradually freed himself from his frigid stance. Very deliberately he walked across the room and looked down at the baby. He bent down, gathered it into his arms and restored it to the cradle. His sister's sobbing ceased upstairs. The boy returned to the stairway and picked his toy car up from the floor. His head drooped as he began running the car up and down his maroon cardigan.

V

Footsteps sounded along the entry and the back gate swung open. The father entered the scullery, and the boy listened to him kicking the mud from his boots. Then the man stood in the doorway and switched on the light. The boy blinked. He looked across at his father, who stared back at him questioningly. The man looked down at his wife, who lay motionless now in the armchair. He took two quick steps to the cradle and saw the baby. His head cocked up sharply towards his son.

“What’s . . . what’s?” But the man couldn’t find his words. Both father and son looked towards the pale, quivering woman.

On the window sill of the scullery a dummy nipple lay in a cellophane wrapper beside an empty biro. The knot-holes in the fence were no longer visible through the gathering darkness.

—John Ferns

Iron Song to Asphalt Roll

While high melodic myths now settle to a midland sea,
And dying siren weeps Odyssean steel-ship passing far;
Sweet weeping centres piercing love on silent factory,
Lost racket-forming roar sends sweeping steel-ship from its shore;
Now raises black successor to a million-stitched twin scar.

The pride of past vibrating trestles spanning ancient gorge,
Long echoed in the fading shrill that marks each measured sweep—
Lost to longing ears now gone—transforms to plaintive dirge,
Composes saddened iron-song: steel-squeal and hammer-gong;
Absorbed by rising rumble-call of tar and concrete-creep.

Black asphalt steaming roll, empty swath of trammelled ground,
Anticipating tire-whine surge alive on sinewed thread;
Fierce harmony, sharp counterpoint, harsh rhythm-ripple-pound,
Wasps visioned art intense with strong constructed confidence;
New sculpted steel caressed by rushing multi-measured tread.

Above this vibrant pulse of life that links each throbbing mind,
Deep diesel-notes surge golden knots, raw rust, swift silver flame,
Brief heritage of pride and trust, consummate strength designed;
Geared tension raising tongue, shapes throbbing born in steel-bound lung;
Internal echoed solitude—new living myths—new fame.

—Andrew Turnbull

The Puppeteer

Last fall the village puppeteer
Staged his famous play;
The puppet danced his tragic part
To autumn's rustling sway.

The puppet was a perfect cast,
A mirror of his master;
And strings of steel to fingers sewn
Bound man to modelled plaster.

Our hands arose in strange applause
For the dance which closed the tale,
When all about the stage we felt
A chilling Northern gale.

Amidst our trembling group of shapes
A country girl in white
Came selling from a silver tray
Spring flowers which seized our sight;

She smiling passed from face to face
To staring puppeteer,
Displaying buds of ancient seed
Which bloomed anew that year.

Like thawing pools his eyes alit,
A smile cracked plaster lips;
His puppet crashed through blowing leaves,
Strings parting his fingertips.

—Richard Ripley

Totem Trees in Autumn

We have always lived near the village near
Great horses like whales plucking furrows across the banjo sea face
With a ground swell of hills halfmoonning in the clutch of the sun.
Through the nets and fingers of our eyes we know
That those thin reefs of maple at the edge
Will string the banjo, spoke the wheel of this bright season
With a surf of lions lashing in the wind.

—C. Mountford



Fouad Fanaki

What will you do with so many stars?
Hide them in corners to brighten all shadows,
Give them to blindmen whose eyes are unborn,
Heap them together and gather their glory,
Or smother their light with the flush of the morn?

What will you do with sweet silver trumpets?
Cry out your joy and your praise to creation,
Waken the lips and the throats of the dumb,
Sing to the heavens and swell to the seraphs,
Or mourn for the loveless, the heartless, the numb?

What of your hopes, and what of your dreamings?
What of the fire that stirs you to flame?
Laughter you have, but what of your fear
Of lightening and thunder and original blame?

I'll give you a star! I'll give you a trumpet!
The spark and the echo creating them all;
And though you may use them, peruse them, or lose them,
You'll be dust under foot before they will fall!

—Hilary Bates

Let Me Light the Next One . . .

Depraved, the wandering menstrual moon
Reaps down the valley a bucket of fire
Doomed as the sculptor hack his rock
The pumpkin spins on a string.

The fox too preys in his arsonous heart
Blesses the hen and her fox-filled egg
Love, lit from their star-crossed match
Burns toward shadowed corners.

Who swings to the dance of crows?
That eat the grain, that peck the lover's eye?
In the back seat of his brain
Squirm the dolls of smouldering straw.

—Don McKay

KITSILANO

It is what the English speaking residents of Montreal together choose to call a "muggy" evening, this one, though for Montreal in mid-Summer it is a modest mugginess and far from the cloistered hearth. Bib and Jackson, in their third story downtown walkup, are graced with neither an air conditioner nor a sizeable refrigerator freezing compartment. They make do with, take it or leave it, love. Fortunately, each of them may parade his ludicrous nakedness from room to room and know it will evoke the affectionate guffaws it requires. Bib's nakedness is of the near perfect, only slightly ribald, variety. Jackson's is North American Obese. They have been living together for just over a year and married the same amount of time.

They nest beneath immense towers of commerce, Bib and Jackson, hunting grounds of the suburban tribes who rattle in to town with the dawn, though only to snare and consume one another. The victors are welcome to such spoils. Bib and Jackson Pert, in the third and uppermost storey of those ancient Quebec stone premises, will linger unambitious. There, amidst the clutter, racket and grime, is where they can finger to perfection the bubbling clay of their inchoate acquaintance; and afterward lick the bowl clean.

With their union flourishing Bib is fulfilled. With Bib fulfilled, and his own mating instinct accommodated, Jackson alternates between rollicking good humour and testy apprehension. Most often Bib's playful demonstrations of love persuade him to contentment. Occasionally, when Bib is napping or out-of-sorts, the old edginess overtakes him and Jackson ponders a master cynic's cupboardful of perplexities and peccadilloes. On the cupboard's bottom shelf and within easy reach stands the largest cannister of them all. To twist off its lid is to release the stench of oceans and the mechanical agonies of air raid sirens. Since his encounter two years ago with the sibling air raid sirens squatting atop Vancouver, Jackson's subconscious has refused to drop the subject. Then, one winter day during a prolonged rainy spell, errant drainage waters seeped into the wiring system of Vancouver's alert Reveres, prompting them to sound off for a total of eight distasteful minutes. Throughout their blaring, Jackson's wits had deserted him. He had succumbed absolutely to fear.

Now he hunkers over his labours in their Montreal apartment's huge white living-room. Always a deft carpenter, he is crafting a fleet of birchbark canoes for one of Montreal's waxwork museums.

Coaxing a fresh stem of poplar to a gentle bend, scraping a patch of fungus from a scroll of bark or planing a cedar plank, he can count on being assaulted at least once every hour by one of the lesser siren species — sniggering ambulance, bellicose fire reels, modish police cruiser — that flit through downtown Montreal like bumblebees in a field of ripe sunflowers. Sometimes, when he is alone and one of these sirens commences its noise close by the living-room windows, Jackson's subconscious winces through a playback of that singular occasion in Vancouver. Then, when at last the unwelcome sound is identified, he wags his head like a comedian's imitation of a punchdrunk fighter and resumes the task at hand.

As every siren expert knows, the ordinary siren will betray its origin just at that point when, having reached its first pinnacle, it dips down to arm itself for the next loud upward rush. At this juncture, an ambulance siren will snigger fitfully, a fire reels siren will cough, a police cruiser siren will whistle softly like the young fellow in the dentist's waiting room. Once an air raid siren's single chord is plucked from the guts of the machine, it persists, with no variation, until the machine is switched off.

That winter in Vancouver, Jackson had made himself known to no one. Truculence, born of timidity, had seen to that. Having sortied out to the West Coast in September, he had puddled in graduate studies in philosophy at the University of British Columbia. Disgruntled by November, he had negotiated the partial refund of his tuition fees and lapsed into ononism and pokey exploration. Vancouver's virtue was its beaches. Jackson could plant himself on a chunk of rusty log, refugee from a pack which had been tugged into the harbour. Later it would be lopped and chiselled into firewood by one of the gaffers who, early in the Spring, sculpted such drifters down to size; heaped in ancient pickup trucks smeared fluorescent orange by log innards, the pieces of Jackson's sodden throne would be stuffed into the greasy fireplaces of the North Shore gentry to sputter and fume.

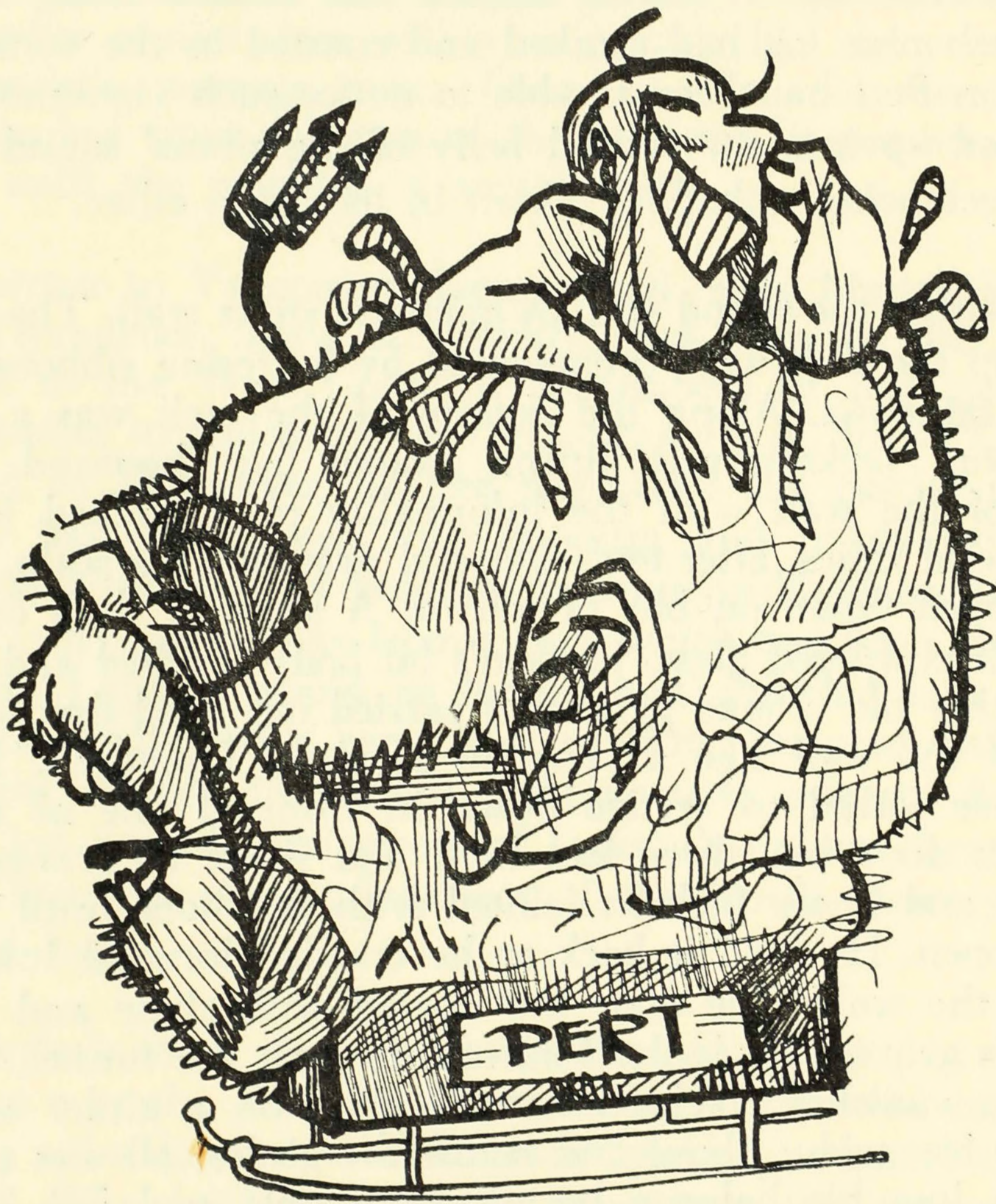
Once seated, there were the mountains to look at, or the foam swishing up over the khaki hardpack sand, or the hard core of the city — four miles distant across Burrard Inlet — its pastel apartment blocks and office buildings cowering beneath the topiaried local mountains. During those waterlogged winter months he could promenade the length of the beach, his beach, Kitsilano Beach, snubbing clique upon clique of flapping sea gulls. He could, because he was Jackson Pert, newcomer to Vancouver and unused to oceans, investigate the colours and convolutions of the sea shells; the stench

of the thick black vegetable matter — perhaps kelp — which tiered the aggregation of boulders at water's edge by the spit; the impact of the perpetual winter rain, cannonading the pink stucco chamber pot of Vancouver. He could take the sea into his hand and, as it glided down his wrist, tongue the salted digits shocked by Pacific cold.

Then came that last visit to the beach when the city's platoon of air raid sirens opened up, unannounced, to coat the mist and pervade the rain with sound. Crosslegged on a log, Jackson had apprehended, his stomach fretting. The systole of sound had never varied in tone or volume, had never gasped for breath. Above the cringing waters the fowl of the air had fluttered and wheeled, ignoring the sound with the panic of their distraught wings. Except for the gulls there had not been much movement on Kitsilano Beach; except for the rain, no courage. A rotting salmon had bobbed along the shoreline. A fresh pine log had dunked and coasted in the water further out. Jackson Pert had been unable to notice such vignettes. He had been gulped up into the rotund belly of the sirens' sound and was already freelancing unhappily about in its virgin ether.

Deep within the sound was an immense stone wall. The shards of mirror atop the wall were ornamented by fluttering ribbons of flesh, skin and rainbows. Along the bottom of the wall was a series of orange doors. Jackson was flitting around five thousand odd perspectives of the wall with the informality of a ditched jet fighter plane. Several times, after end-over-end descents, his scalp, face and palms slapped down on bits of mirror. A score of flesh cuts shimmered with powdered glass. Jackson's fat body hurdled and thrashed through ether like a mad gymnast's carried out head-first attacks on the top of the wall like a vengeful Humpty Dumpty's. Suddenly, Jackson was forced to vertigo down in front of one of the small doors. This door was three feet high and made of orange sponge. On hands and knees Jackson feinted with the door until it agreed to swing open. He held it back as he crawled forward into a short tunnel in the wall. The door was coated with slime and he relinquished his grip on it gladly. Midway through the tunnel, the walls and ceiling vanished. Jackson was kneeling on a girder of gummy sand three feet wide. Above and below the girder, all was emptiness. Should he lose his balance he would tumble and fall in endless descent. Beneath his palms, the girder's substance sweated. He knew without looking back that the stone wall and its orange doors and mirror glass had forsaken him. The girder was as many miles long behind him as it was in front. Before him the girder extended out into space like an equator deprived of its planet.

When the girder upended to become a pillar of sand, Jackson started to skid, then to skoot, down the pillar's infinite length. Jackson was drowning in high speed. He was skidding at ever greater velocity down the pillar. Particles of sand were being knocked loose by his hooking hands. This jettisoned sand was infesting his face with thousands of important wounds. His trunk and legs were hitting the pillar and ricocheting off it, with the persistence of a metronome clucking a boogie woogie tempo. His hands were alternating at the job of gripping the column of sand. His chin was tobogganning down the pillar on an insubstantial wad of slaver, blood and sand grains. His lungs were receiving insufficient oxygen. Nostrils were plugged and ugly. He was drowning in high speed. The cuffs of his pants were roiling around raw knees. Jacket and shirt were bunched under armpits and throat. Minute cannon balls were lambasting jiggling white flesh. His left hand let go of the pillar though his right hand could not establish a grip.



Commiserative, the pillar keeled over, curtsied and toppled. Its width contracted to ten inches, gathering strength, then babbled out sand in all directions: dry sand, breakfast cereal sand, Victor Herbert sand that flowed to form an undulating desert of sand beneath ten silver suns. Jackson was lying on his side. He was cramped

and naked. The blood and wounds, the gummy muck in his mouth and nostrils, all had fled with his clothes. He had neither sex nor teeth. Mindful of his losses he flopped over on his stomach. His crotch, hairless now, resembled an unflexed elbow. He was like a plaster kewpie doll. He was blushing and scorching, weakly attempting some necessary psychological adjustments. He lay skewered to the desert by his lack of sex. The top layer of desert sand foxtrotted amateurishly, inspired by spurts of air fuming up from beneath the sand surface. One warm spurt tickled his crotch at discrete random intervals. Jackson blubbered and snuffled. Ten nearby suns dried his tears as soon as they hit the sand. Two pyramids of salt collected below his eyes. He did not care to move his head. The pyramids grew to his eyes, grappled with them and stung them shut. Instantly, his eyelids were salt-coated and weighted down. The salt behaved like blocks of sidewalk concrete and would not peel off. He nuzzled the crook of his arm. It tasted like freshly baked ginger bread. Toothless, he guppied at it without venom.

The suns puckered and rouged him. They charred his body until it commenced to shrivel. He sensed the advantages for him in the sun's program. They were reducing him to an ash. His terror decreased in proportion with his brain and the merciful suns had done with him quickly: an instant of grey dust that lurked inscrutable in a crevice in a canyon in a grain of sand. The ten suns chuckled and Pickwick-like, scurried off in search of other parties requiring their philanthropy. With neither brain nor sex to perturb it the particle of ash snuggled down in its crevice and hibernated.

The tide chuckled as it advanced on Kitsilano Beach. A mewling gull tried to promote a tail-wind with its wings, then teetered down through riffs of air currents to seat itself among peers on the water a few yards out from shore. A monotone of noises from the distant city traffic filtered through miles of moisture to achieve the beach. The hardpack sand glistened with millions of sea droplets. Surrounded by these beauty spots, a salmon rotting on the shore displayed its elegance to an incoming gull. The new arrival kited higher, exasperating its hunger, then coasted down and tiptoed the last few feet of sky to roost on the salmon's back. Though it poked strenuously at its prize the gull was competing for the salmon's favours with twelve other scavengers in less than a minute.

Across the waters the topmost spans of the Lions Gate Bridge were penciled on overlapping sheets of puffy grey matter. As always, the bridge was busy with vehicles shuttling purposefully between Vancouver and the comfortable North Shore communities. A tug towing three black barges loaded with pulp hauled its charges single file into the harbour. Its captain announced his return with a

toot on the craft's foghorn. The salutation was smothered in mist. The captain tooted again. Immediately behind and running parallel to Kitsilano Beach was a public park, with curved slopes exactly right for summer-time family picnics, wooden changing huts and a swimming pool encircled by tubular railings. The park was jigsawed by an assortment of gravel paths and scattered groupings of wooden benches. Beyond the park was a residential area of the city which, like the park and the beach, derived its name from the Kitsilano Tribe of coastal indians. Several blocks away from the harbour, between a pastel green stucco bungalow and a yellow frame bungalow, was the captain's house. Every square inch of both its front and back yards was utilized for flower gardening and, within five or six weeks, the sky blue stucco cottage would be ringed by a moat of this year's early bloomers. Once again the foghorn tooted.

On Kitsilano Beach Jackson Pert was crosslegged on a log. His dark woolen coat was still taking a drubbing from the heavens. His toes clogged around in a puddling of wet wool. Crumbs of orange wood, wedged beneath the tips of his fingernails, prodded injured skin. Schools of goosepimples played over his hide. He was cold, wet and thoroughly frightened but there he was, in the flesh, and the sound of air raid sirens had unravelled down through a quick series of decibels and frequencies into silence.

Evidently, it had been a false alarm. World War Three had not been declared. Vancouver was not going to play host to its apportioned I.C.B.M.'s after all. Jackson's bowels were pressuring him, his stomach was disorderly. He required a hot bath, some food and the comforts of his bed-sitting room. He would tune in the C.B.C. station on his radio and discover why the sirens had been made to sound. After floundering in the bathtub he would towel himself dry and watch the translucent bathwater percolate into the partially stopped-up drain. He would dress himself in warm, dry clothes. He would fry up a mess of bacon and eggs in the fry pan that was never washed and only rarely scraped clean of debris. Slothful in the bulging maroon easy chair, he would perhaps read a book, perhaps write a letter or sleep. It was entirely up to him.

He stood up, let a rush of nausea subside and wrung a jaw-cracking yawn out of his system. Holding his hands near his face he watched them tremble then pushed them into his pockets and steadied them with his thighs. It had been a false alarm! What could have happened to have set the damn sirens off? Those stupid Civil Defense bastards had likely been having one of their bloody dry runs. Christ, what a crew of idiots! Why couldn't they play some other game? A tugboat in the inlet tooted its horn. Jackson



—Ralph Willsey



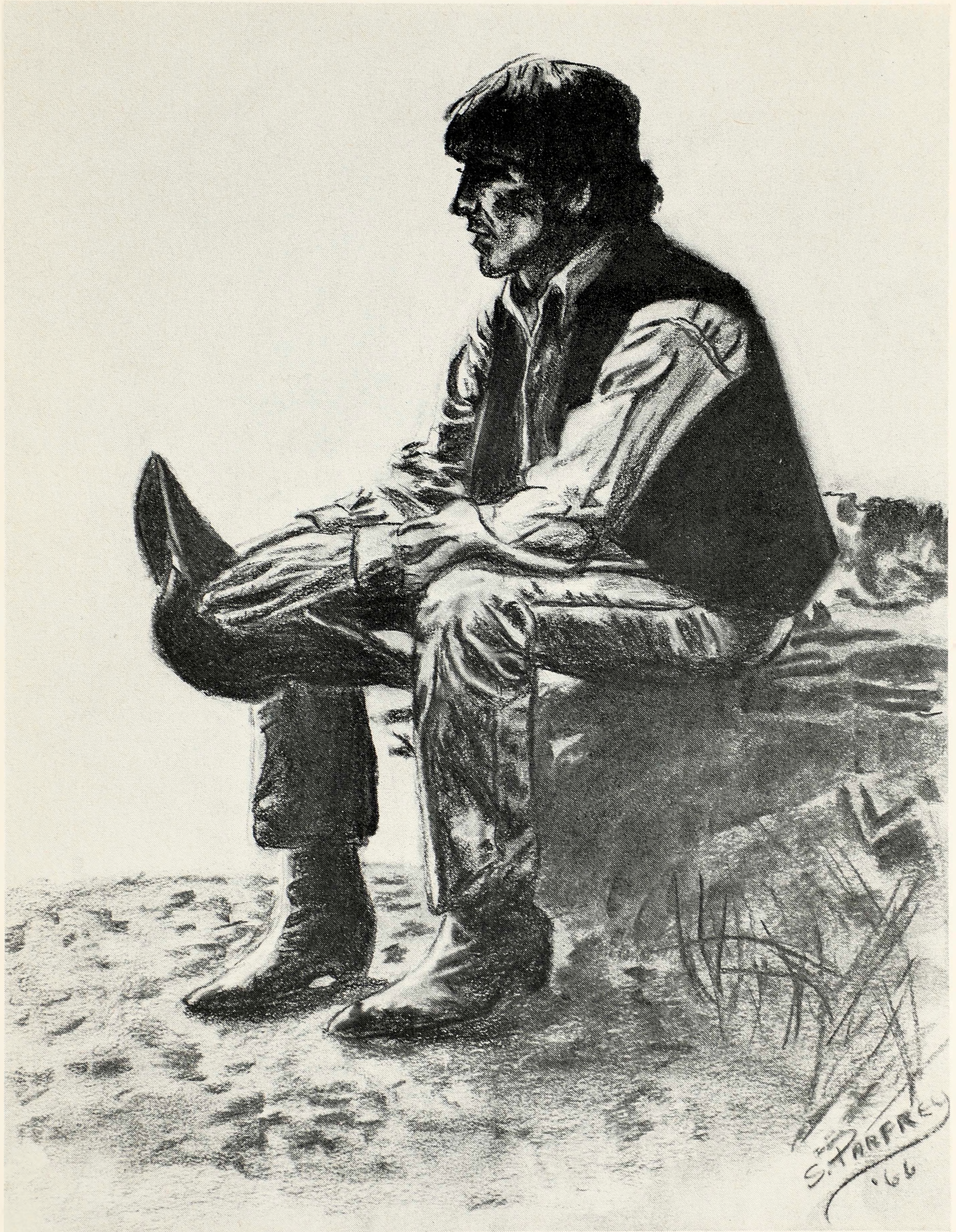
"The Ghost of U. C."

—David R. Brown



"University Drive"

—Zeller and Weese



"Charcoal Sketch"

—Susanne Parfrey

almost waved in reply. A fresh pine log, dunking and coasting thirty yards out, frolicked in the turbulent aftermath of the tug's passage. Jackson tottered along the beach, heading for home. Turning, he crossed the loam of the park, green even in January, and goose-stepped up the steep, red brick hill to his room, six blocks from Kitsilano Beach.

Two days later Jackson boarded a long distance bus. If the silly air raid sirens could be triggered by rain water, then Vancouver and its coastal winters was no place for Jackson Pert. When he disembarked, after four days' journeying, Montreal was enjoying a blizzard. Now, two years later, the living-room of the Perts' downtown Montreal apartment serves as a workshop and a seraglio. Weekdays, it masks itself with aboriginal implements and resins, reeks of the perfumes of freshly peeled birch bark and airplane glue, vibrates to the thumping of stereophonic tom-toms. When, naked, the two of them, Bib and Jackson Pert, squat in the skeleton of a canoe and paddle gamely through the rapids of the speckled linoleum floor, their war whoops frighten even the fire reels into muting their sirens. At such times, Jackson is cheered beyond reason. The fresh water spray splashes up into his face, he digs his paddle into the current until the flat blade and one hand are submerged in cool liquid, and the dainty craft plunges and swerves, jogging through the best of the river's waves. Her bottom shaped by its purchase on the middle gunwale, Bib is up ahead of him and paddling strenuously out of tempo. She is a fair voyageur and may, someday, be allowed to take the stern.

—D. G. Evans

A Satire

like a blue three dollar bill
homosapien maunders the hill
sand lime heat to hide
to discipline but with nonconformity?
thus stands egotistical oak
in vernal splendour
at ruinous autumn
they stare no more
yet perennial pine never hides
and never exposes
beard clothes peroxide
never made three dollar bill
ink paper blue
never made holman on the hill

—dtn

A Pacific Wave

He was born of a hell-wombed woman
bred windily in a rock-bottom bed
while the children played tug boat
in a thousand-mile schoolyard.
He grew from teasing, rolling youth
to a seething ripeness in the drop of a calm
from the beak of a starry-eyed gull.
Then, hoarding his bullocky pride,
he raced through fog and rain, past crashing rocks
to rumble and roar and grind on the granite block
then break on the fish-bob, diving ducks
and die, a lapping, fallen crest at the feet
of a teasing, rolling youth.

—Allan Fraser

A SHORTE TALE CONCERNING A WOEFUL WARLOCK

Mallory Bengimen was a warlock of extremely good breeding, birth and brains. His forehead was high and broad, his eyes a piercing blue reflecting the moon and stars, and his head was crowned with a thick wave of deep auburn hair. He dressed as a warlock should dress — in a long cloak of dark heavy wool which fell in deep midnight-blue folds to the tops of his ebony boots. When Mallory waved his hands to spirits or beckoned to a wandering wind, a flashing ruby hit the light with brilliance — it was his ancestral amulet.

Warlocks belong to a very curious caste of supernatural beings. They are mortal and immortal as also are their sister witches, but somehow Mallory felt less immortal than his female counterparts. It could have been the essential femininity of womankind that gave his acquaintances an eternal flavour. Mallory's essential masculinity never seemed to him as an everlasting factor in his immortality. It was just there. Men are not surprised to find themselves men, but to women it is a constant source of amazement to discover that they are female.

Mallory found himself standing on rocky crags looking tragic and mysterious. He seemed to do very little but be a rather handsome prototype of a warlock. The witches in his clan were constantly busy improving recipes and swapping spells, but such culinary talents were usually left to witches — it was part and parcel of their essential femininity, and thus part of their immortality — thought Mallory. As for himself, although he was extremely well versed in cooking concoctions, he preferred incantations, prophecies and cats when he practised his profession.

Still, it was rather aimless, standing tragic and mysterious for ages and doing nothing. Sometimes he desperately wished that he wasn't of a supernatural nature, that he couldn't understand everything in the universe, that people and flowers and skies did not seem so dull to him. His name bothered him too — it was such a contrasting name, half witchlike and half mortal man; and to be discontent with one's identity and name is hard to bear.

Undoubtably Mallory Bengimen had a problem. What troubled him more than his quandary itself was how to solve it. He couldn't appeal to his sister witches, for they were quite happily adjusted to their supernatural state; nor could he turn to his brother warlocks, for they enjoyed standing tragically on rocky crags and mysteriously doing nothing for ages. "The only ones I can consult," he thought, "would be those in another caste of beings. Perhaps the four poetic Muses, they are solicitous creatures . . ."

The rocky crags that extended to cloudy horizons were numerous in Mallory's gaze. With magical ease he could distinguish the mountains sacred to the Gods in the mists above Greece. With a flash of his ring Mallory stood on the verdant slopes of Mt. Parnassus where a singing spring disappeared into the stones below the rich turf. Four

curly-haired maidens in flowing diaphanous gowns stopped their ring-around-the-rosy when Mallory appeared.

"Can you give a warlock a soul of poetry?" he entreated the Muses.

"You haven't the simplicity of a shepherd," answered Thalia. "Nor the grandeur of a hero," replied Calliope. "You haven't a heart," Erato insisted. "And if you have none of these qualities how could you possibly understand a poetic soul?" asked Euterpe.

Mallory sat down in utter dejection. "I am so empty," he mourned. "A warlock has no emotion and no understanding of it. All I feel is deep emptiness where traditionally I should feel a heart of stone. Somehow in my creation, my stone heart was omitted and hence, I feel a desire, a great longing for warmth, for love, for a soul to fill my void. Must I be held responsible for my own immortality? I would give it up, you know. Only please, please give me a soul, a poetic soul."

"I really don't think we have the power to grant you a soul," said Calliope. "We can instill in you the power to write poetry, but a poetic soul — no, that is quite out of our department."

"Only Zeus could give you a poetic soul," Thalia added.

"Oh, but I couldn't go to Zeus," Mallory replied hastily, "We are feuding at present."

"If you and Zeus are on bad terms now, there is no chance in heaven that he would ever give you a soul, he holds grudges like a bind weed. Besides, if you had a soul you would no longer be immortal, and no longer a warlock. That would be unbearable to you Mallory, there is no greater loneliness than that of a displaced warlock. So, suppose instead of a poetic soul, we give you the ability to write poetry — which, to some men, is as great a possession."

When Euterpe had finished, the four Muses turned to Mallory and awaited his reply.

He was silent for a quiet time, absently rubbing his scarlet amulet, while visions of happy rocky crags lightened in his mind. "I shall be most thankful to you," he said, bowing deeply in his midnight-blue folds to the four poetic Muses.

"Then, O Mallory Bengimen, warlock of the sea, sky, earth and ether, drink from yon Castalian spring, drink deeply, and when you depart hold this remembrance:

Come to us, and ye shall find
Answers to your singing mind."

Much, much later, Mallory awoke at the summit of his rocky crag, completely intoxicated and highly ecstatic. At his feet was an enormous pewter pot, half filled with his version of the Castalian spring. Its clear, sweet depths caught the pale glow of the morning sun behind the mists.

If you go out walking in the earliest of mornings, when the earth is very still and even the birds are quiet, when grass and leaves and stones glisten in their mantle of dew, and if you hear a sudden shout of joy from the jagged clouds above, then you know that Mallory Bengimen has just put another incantation into rhyme.

Hilary Bates

marbles and flag poles

rythmic control, artificial contrivances
mechanical or pharmacological
were APPARENT,

yet the output of marbles
was PROLIFIC.

One by one neonates, virile
were injected into the plasmic flow
to bounce, roll, chip, crack, collide, or creep
in sporting confusion,

this was VITALITY.

of shapes, variations too numerous upon a generic theme,
yellow, black, red, white, copper
were colours

PREDOMINATING.

while shades
provided arbitrary intonations of kindred

where brotherhood
was spewed from the pulpits.

and every marble of every tribe shall carry a flag
so it was set forth in the book of wisdom

and every marble carried a flag

crosses unrelated to female sex
and six pointed stars
blazed like neon lights,
attracting flies, but saccharine not sugar.

agnostics were hermaphroditic
neither nor

while atheists were bald pated.

But every flag
carried the accidents of Heredity and environment
and neophyte innocence
became conditioned and the signs of the zodiac
were heralds of dollars, neurotics, fortified defenses,
phallic super structures and boredom.

Where has love gone or God for that matter?

I'm bored as my bland diet.

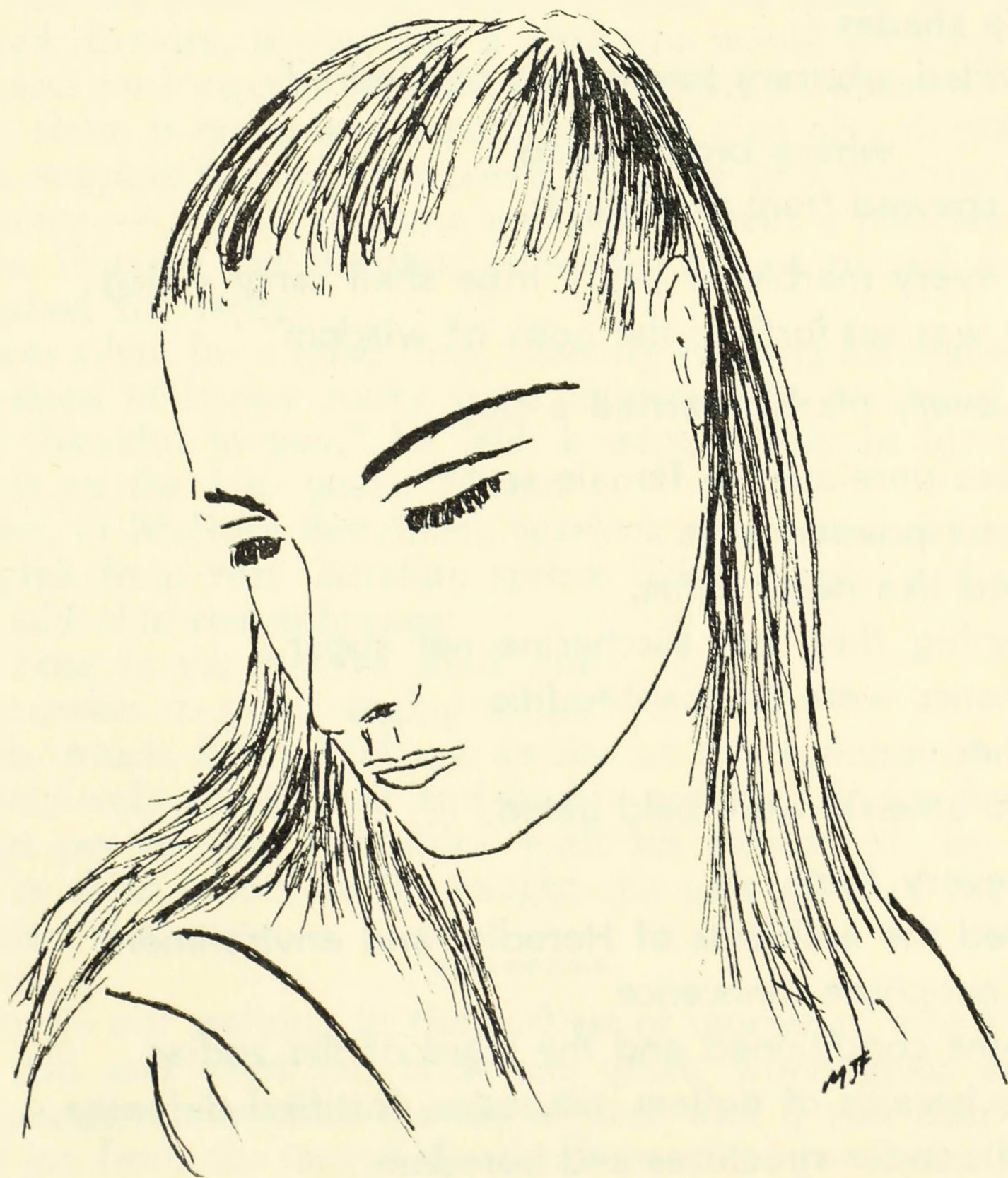
And you think
another cynic, angry hits a dusty path
and rolls towards a vulva
gathering no moss.

damn it — — orbits, marbles
molecular activity may simulate
another coincidence

At least according
to the latest test tube surrogate.

Mother were you ever
or where are you
if you are?

—victor vere



Rain Walker

Sore and heavy I went to brood,
To ease the crease off old sorrows
As rain sweated from leaves like blood,
The road like stones and bitter.
Wind raged and arched against me
Plummeting like arrows, and earth turned
For answer. Night's message blew its trumpets,
And the chorus of stars burned.

Prayer was chastened with simplicity,
Beaten by hard thongs of rain,
Foundered among the closed curtains and agony,
Vanished like a grail of light
On Renoir red and brown glanced leaves.
Lost parables startled my shadows flight
Which touched the grilled and gurgling drains
With almost human and reluctant pains

I thank God for the infinity of small boys
Minds, which crackle like cellophane
And overflow my sight. One boy
Rings a tattoo on the bark to gain
Chestnuts, and finds only calluses
And three shining conkers for his trouble.
Another swishes the street with an earless stick,
Breaking all images double.

To them what shall be denied?
They who walked cheerfully along, their hats
Sodden and droopy with rain, gooseberry eyes,
Their mouths bread hungry, hot
With chips, their fingers strong
With vinegar, and I accept what
Their human and all too faithless mouths emote—
Fingers at an all too willing throat.

—Richard Rooke

Announcing . . .

1965 - 1966 AWARDS

FICTION	D. G. Evans Graduate Arts I
NON-FICTION AND HUMOUR	Arnim Walter Honours Arts III Middlesex College
POETRY	John Ferns Graduate Arts II
GRAPHICS	Suzanne Parfrey Honours Arts IV University College
PHOTOGRAPHY	Ralph Willsey Arts I Middlesex College
HONOURABLE MENTION	Charles Grant Graduate Science I

THESE AWARDS are given for the best work printed in this year's two issues of Folio in each category.

FOLIO wishes to thank the Alumni Association, the Graduate Students' Association, and the councils of University College and Middlesex College for their co-operation in making these awards possible, also Dr. James Reaney and Dr. R. G. N. Bates of the English Department for judging the literary contest.

