

1975

Southwinds - Spring 1975

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- Southwinds -



Southwinds

number four

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Kansas City, Mo.

printing

Maryville Printing Co.

to thank

Paul Ohlman
Glen Hoorman
and
Adrian Daane

to remember

Jack Boyd

*

"Health, Southwind, books, old trees, a boat, a friend."

--R. W. Emerson
February, 1847

*

Note: Southwinds is not an official publication of the University of Missouri-Rolla.

*

POSTCARD POEM

Dance
with dancing

sing
with voice & song

turn with turning

cook
with heat

walk in storm

read
good books in libraries

out & down
& meet thy love

rise with red sun

ride along freeways
with every body else

& say hello
to our mutual friends.

Eric Chaet

Knee High in the Music Store

I was about knee high in the music store, sitting on the floor, looking across the aisle at a stack of Phoebe Snow albums. I was thinking about their destinies in the hands and tone arms of their future buyers. I was mostly nervous.

Not about the records; about the store. Usually I don't go to this store because the prices are too high and the man that runs the place is kind of grouchy. I mean, he doesn't like people to touch the instruments.

How I came to be in there happened like this: I was in the Kroger, two doors down, buying hamburger and oranges when I got the idea I wanted to play some twelve string guitar. (Note: people who play things never say they will play "a guitar," or "a piano." They always say they will play "some guitar," or "some piano." Beats me why they do.)

Anyway, I thought I wanted to play some twelve string guitar (there it is again) and since I was in the neighborhood I thought the music store might befriend me. I considered this as I left the Kroger, lightened and enlightened by \$4.73.

Moving on to the health food store, I got some granola and began to think seriously. Now here's the thing about playing in a music store: If you play, you either are required to be good or bad. Bad musicians are usually just learning, a socially acceptable activity, and are forgiven for sounding so bad. On the other hand, good musicians are playing there because they are good, and that (Americans) is also socially acceptable. No Mister In-Between.

Well, the deal is, I'm not too good, but then I'm not bad either. Just sort of O.K. See what I mean? You feel kind of funny about going in somewhere and snapping around on someone's \$300 guitar. See why I was nervous?

I walked by once before deciding to go in.

It wasn't so bad inside. Warmer anyway. The old man wasn't around, and the only person in sight was a sweet lady who smiled at me as I came in.

I asked her, "O.K. if I play some instruments?"

"Sure," she said, wondering if I was good or bad.

I unloaded myself of grocery bags and started the bidding with a Ventura six string to warm up on. It was festooned with red/white/blue SALE tags which indicated the store folks had marked it down to its original price. I told you they were high. Well, anyway, pretty soon my fingers began to find the right places and got to movin' easy. Doing O.K., I kept it low so as not to tip my hand (one way or the other) to the customers that started coming in. Moved on to a bigger bodied Ovation and finger picks and began to forget my troubles.

I noticed a man and his son coming in as I sat down with the twelve string. It was my first twelve in years, the first one since I sold my old one a long time ago. A preliminary expedition up the fretboard proved amazing. "Who turned on the record," I thought. I looked at my fingers and my fingers looked at the strings and I began to forget where I was.

Somewhere in the next five or six minutes of musical fantasy I considered Leo Kottke, Tilt Billings, and The Student Prince. I considered the title of my first album and who would produce it and I considered that I might have some musical aptitude after all. I considered that to be real nice.

The end of that piece I was playing has a One-thing-slides-into-another part and when I'd finished it off and let the sound fade away, I looked up and found myself in a music store, across from some Phoebe Snow albums. Before I had time to consider that, I noticed some knees standing in front of me. It was the Dad, the kid, and the music store lady. I noticed then that the kid was holding a guitar case and that he was looking at me kind of funny.

I was still coming back to consciousness when I heard the Dad say, "See Johnny, if you practice long enough you'll be able to play that good."

I got a strong hold on myself. Tried not to look blown away, and pretended to retune a string before saying thank you.

But in case you thought the part about the magical twelve string guitar was what this story is about, I say to you: "Fooled again!" What this story is about is about the music store lady. Allow me to explain:

After the musical interlude I had to walk around some and get my bearings before going on. Take a look at the cereberal compass; I'm sure you understand what I mean. So I walked around until the blood resumed a reasonably even distribution in my body again and I found a grand piano. Yes, a grand piano.

I can't resist a grand piano. A spinet or an upright I can resist, but not a grand. I think it has something to do with the size. I also like sycamore trees, oceans, some trucks and large asses on women. I don't care for Cadillacs, however, which seems to null the hypothesis. But as I say, there was this grand piano and my confidence was at shoulder level, so I sat down and started to try to find some interesting combinations of keys to push. Evidentially the music store lady took this as a sign of virtuosity; Lee's Summitt's Julian Bream at work. So she kind of glided over.

She leaned on the piano and I went on pretending to play and looking at my hands because I can't play without looking at my hands. Pretty soon we started to talk a little and she sat down on the bench.

I talked. She smiled.

She talked and I found myself smiling.

I played another little bit and forgot to watch my hands. She had brown eyes.

She told me she went to school and worked weekends at the store and was interested in Psychology. Some customers came in but her sales pitch was for me. I sold easy but put on my coat before my blood began to redistribute itself again.

She said, "Since the manager took the stereo out it's been so quiet. Maybe you can come back and play again sometime." I tried to get a strong hold on myself and pretended to button my coat before looking at her eyes. "Thank you," I said. "Soon, maybe."

So that's what I was going to tell about the sweet music store lady. It got a little long in the telling, but that's because I like to fill in the details. Maybe you like that and maybe not. And maybe when I go back sometime my fingers won't work and her eyes won't work and I won't get around to asking what she thinks of oceans and sycamore trees. Sometimes that happens. But I'm not going to try to think that one out, no not me.

by Neill Fleeman

Summer 1973: Downers Grove Illinois

"You shall live in square
gray houses in a barren land
and beside those square gray
houses you shall starve."

--prophecy of Drinkwater,
an indian, circa 1890

waga chun rustling tree
sacred cottonwood of the Oglala Sioux
stands flowering at the center of a nation's hoop
bark fed to ponies makes them strong

outside my suburban window
this majestic tree rises eighty feet
only mark of permanence here
where black illinois topsoil
that gave last year's corn & soybeans
now grows parking lots & shopping centers

in early june moon of making fat
the cotton-tufted seeds
seek the moist dark soil of creekbanks.
they find asphalt and air conditioner filters.
up and down the block
air conditioners die gasping for breath
circuit breakers blow
stereos wind down through sound
die beneath the hearing threshold.
the Wasichu lies wounded,
an arrow in his electricity.

in this year of the cicada
the only place i've seen them
is this cottonwood.
farmer whose corn i run past explains,
"Seventeen years ago weren't nothing here but fields.
All this is new. Now in town you hear 'em in the elms.
Drown out the Burlington some say."

none of this civilized panorama
was here seventeen years ago
for a cicada to climb
save for this single cottonwood.

how bizarre a view the cicada
must have of this progress,
framed once every seventeen years
the epitome of time lapse photography
nineteen twenty-two thirty-nine fifty-six
the insane pace of this technocracy
racing by one long rip van winkle dream
model-t, at&t, dc-3, 747
the cicada with more distance on this alpha numeric
madness than poet or anthropologist can get,
what to all of us is all there is
is really just--

one half inch of sandstone
one acre of Mississippi delta
one fern started on its way to oil
one thousand years work on a fossil

indomitable as the cicada's creep up the cottonwood
the bulldozers move across the fields



Salmon Fishing & Scientists

for Hiroaki Kobayashi

An acute observation about scientists,
heard not on campus
but at the other end of University Avenue
where every afternoon an old timer
awaits the return of the salmon fleet:

"There's two kinds of captains, boy,
those that find the fish
and those that follow all the other boats."

Berkeley, California
10 VIII 74



TÜREYIS

The Procreation of the Altaic Tribes
--Adapted from the Prose Translation by Gülten Yener
Frank Doty, amanuensis

That evening they built a tower,
a tower of branches on Altay's peak,
and shut the girls there,
shut the daughters alone on the peak.

The girls waited.

From night within night, Bozkurt came,
his eyes like dawn,
his look like the hope of dawn,
his feathers and hair aflame
with the dawn in his eyes.
Around the tower,
around its four sides he went,
then he stopped--

his eyes' light now was blood,
that melted like iron
and flew to the tower's top,
flew in two drops of light,
a drop clinging to each girl,
drops of light from Bozkurt's eyes
making each girl a star.

Bozkurt sped to the steepest,
to the highest rock of the peak;
the moon--the fearless, godly moon--rose,
the moon's light twined with the wolf's light.
The moon at Altay's peak, the wolf at the peak,
became one before the girls.

Bozkurt called the moon,
called with love, called with strength,
his call frightened silence;
the gaps were being filled--
filled with wolf-light, with moon-light,
filled with the song of the Bozkurt.

Nine nights long Bozkurt howled;
nine nights long, girls stars Altay--
all things seen, all things unseen,
heard his song.

The ninth night ended,
the time had come--trembling together
the girls left the tower;
trembling together, they mounted Bozkurt;
earth trembled, sky trembled;
Bozkurt trembled.

The trembling ceased;
before Bozkurt was a void, a deep gap.
Toward it he flew.
No man could grasp this awesome flight,
but the girls now were more than human--
now they were Bozkurt and gap and sky and Altay--
now they were holy, these daughters of Ay-atom.

The girls gripped Bozkurt's mane,
gripping with joyful madness
as they flew through the dark gaps
between sky and Altay;
together with Bozkurt they shivered in ecstasy--
with a last godly howl he filled the world,
filled the world with joy,
filled it to fullness and beyond.

Bozkurt and the girls hung in the sky,
Bozkurt and the girls became one;
their howl was the first voice
of the people of harmony--
all day, between gaps and sky and Altay, they stayed,
flaring with pleasure, sizzling with daylight.

Bozkurt and the girls became a ball,
a ball of blue light--
no more were they Bozkurt and girls;
they became the ball of blue light
floating and riding the soft breeze;
the light consumed Bozkurt and the girls
with its soft and silent speed.

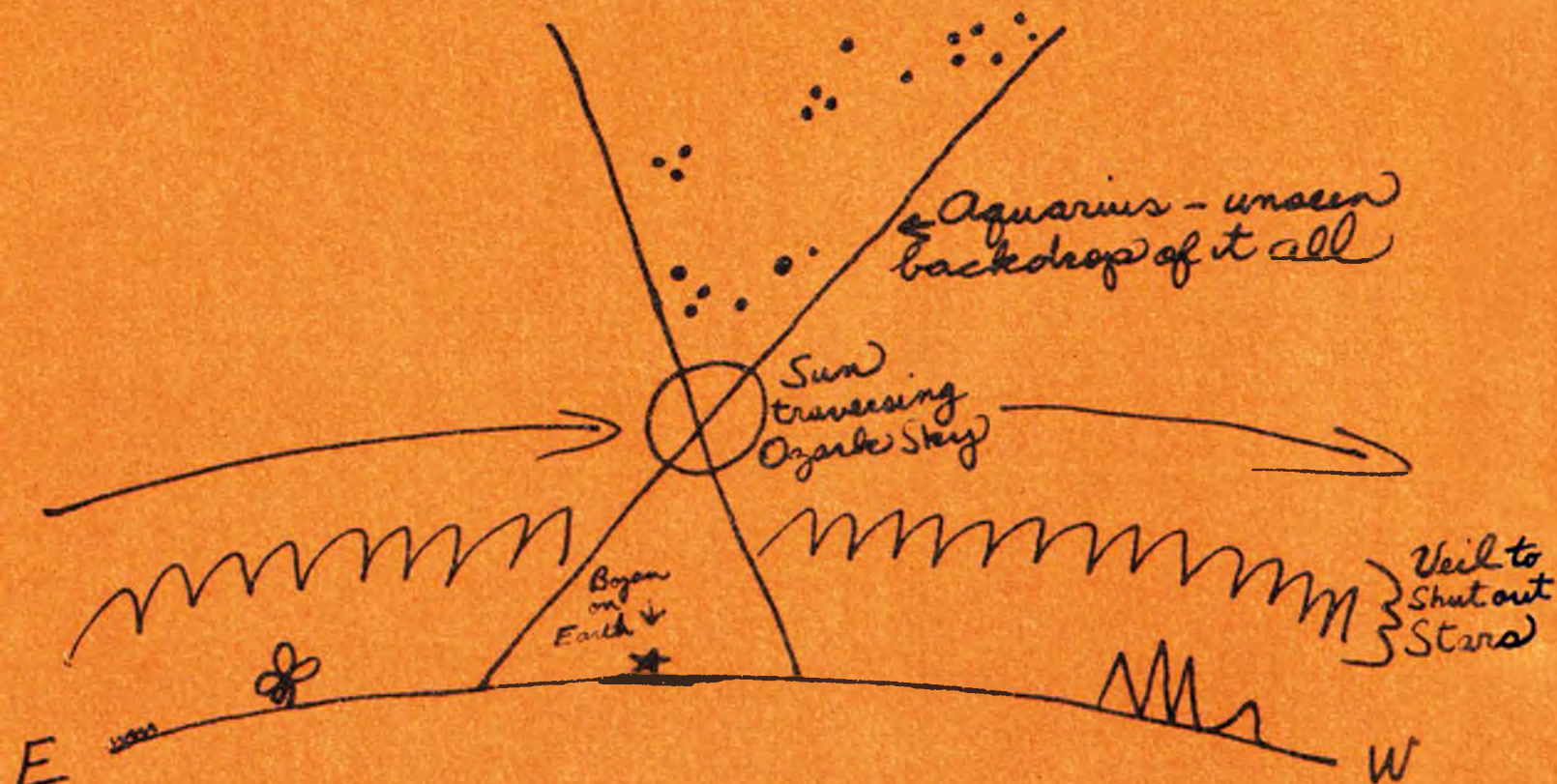
The ball of light dazzled,
it turned, it sped--
it became whiter than fresh milk
then it flowed west,
west toward Hulin mountain;
flaming it burned the night clouds;
flaming it climbed night clouds and sky
made the clouds a stair to climb Mount Hulin.

Bozkurt is the Turkish national beast--a huge grey wolf
with an immense, feathery mane.
Altay and Hulin are mountains sacred to the Altaic
peoples from whom the Turks descended.

Ptolemy Meets the Pharoah
for Denise Low

----- "Sound is faster than light."

I'm sittin on a rough-cut wood bench (curve of buzz saw signature sweeps across the plank). The bench is supported by the floor of a 70 year old house whose foundation is set in the Ozark Plateau which has been above water now for 300 million revolutions of the Earth about the Sun. I raise my head, look up and out feeling that Sun's heat on my face. It is noon, Sun-time. Beyond the Sun is Aquarius, which I cannot see, for the 10 mile thick veil of blue betwixt us.



Pharoah Sanders plays
"Sun in Aquarius"
to celebrate the occasion.
Dark transition
from Capricorn:
Lonnie Smith delving
into piano
thrumming
the taut strings
like a subterranean harp--
fearful sound of temple guardians
at the threshold

scarin off demons
dis/speling miseries
before the door
that opens swiftly to
sweet flight
wheeling and delight
of saxophone and liquid voice
bells,
 drums
 flute
 and
 drums

Bass duet
funky spinal talk

Consumed in
acceleration
of glowing saxophone
screamin and wailin
into the Sun
propelled by
lung/compression
heart/fire
fuel of transmuted pain
ground in low resonance
of droning chimes:

"Accept and cleanse
this offering."

And a return
to oh so easy
dancin
and yodeling, even.

"Father and Mother,
I return from flames of fire
tried and pure and white."

Not exhausted
but revitalized
in fission/fusion
breeder reaction
freeing soul/energy
in purifying intensity.

Entropy confounded.

Jim Bogan

BLUEPRINT

Dream flickers
& time's womb conceives

back beyond beyond
in careless intermingling gases
bodiless
without possibility of failure
rolling among starlessness

where all is
& every thing is not.

Birth shocks
obscure full curve swarm

mechanical multiplication
of cells goes on.

Til new shock illumines day
note emerges from horn
among starlessness

where all is
& every thing is not.

Red dawn's fingers call thru window
of self dreaming
cells echoing direct
in dizzy blood serpentations.

Calling us in flight
to draw line
from A
(within swollen tides of mirror images)
to B
(among crowds
leaping out for snatches
of looks into one another's eyes)

where cells draw together & leap apart
is B, the awakening.

DRAW THE LINE
MIRROR OF DREAM
DRAW THE LINE
TIME HIGHWAY.

Eric Chaet
Palo Alto 74

CONFIRMATION

Looked everywhere for confirmation --
all I found was my heart beating --

& same cruelties, absurdities, & tyrannies
I noticed all the way up thru childhood.

Only difference: my size & capabilities.

Looked everywhere for confirmation
& only occasionally
washed across washes of love:

spray

reaching for shores

granite into sand

& strangers

striding my shorelines

searching

for confirmation.

Eric Chaet

Betty's 81 Cafe

The traveller paused to read the weathered cardboard sign, "No shoes, No shirt - No service," before he swung open the sagging screen door and let it slam shut. A hundred flies buzzed in dizzy circles before returning to their perch on either side of the rusting screen. The place was packed. At the counter to the left of the door, truckers guzzled coffee despite the heat, swapped lies about driving the company's new Peterbilt cabover, and complained about "these crazy bastard Kansas drivers," who would have been crazy bastard Oklahoma drivers had Betty's truck stop been in Oklahoma. The tables were filled with the usual assortment of late-night bowling leaguers and greasy all-night gas station attendants, and the booths back by the rest room were overflowing with long-haired students trying to satisfy a euphoric hunger. At one booth, close to the front door, sat a lone Highway Patrolman.

"Mind if I sit here?" The traveller had already slid into the cracked vinyl bench across from the Patrolman, who didn't look up from his evening paper.

"Jeezus, it's a hot one tonite. I been drivin' four hours, now; thought I'd better stop and get something t'eat. Say, 'bout how far is it to Salina?"

The Patrolman folded his paper and looked at the traveller for the first time. "Salina?" His glance drifted out the streaked picture window, "That'd be about seventy-five miles. Watch the road past Newton, they're workin' on the Interstate up there and they got it all chopped up."

"Thanks, I-"

"Here ya go, Sam. One B-L-T and coffee." Betty was balancing the sandwich plate on top of a coffee cup in her right hand, and held a glass of warm tap water and spotted silverware in her left. She set the cup down and put the plate in front of Sam at the same time that she sloshed the water and

dropped the silverware in front of the traveller. She glared at the latter through a crow's wing wisp of hair. "Yeah, what'll it be?"

"Uh, a menu and some ice water."

"The ice machine's broke, and the menu's over there," Betty pointed a plump finger at a plywood sign above the grimy opening between counter and kitchen. "I'll send a waitress over when I get a chance." With that, she turned and stalked toward the kitchen; she was pretty quick considering her bulk.

The traveller looked toward Sam, who was fighting the flies for every morsel of his dripping sandwich. "Jeezus, what a char--"

He was interrupted by some loud guffaws and shouting from the counter: "Hey, Betty, git yer lard-ass over here." A trucker had killed a cockroach and laid it, feet up, on his "homemade" apple pie. "I din't order this damn thing, an' I'll be fucked if I'm gonna pay fer't." More deep belly laughs.

Tennis shoes slapped the broken linoleum as Betty stormed over to the counter and looked at the trucker, then the pie, then back again. "Yer already fucked, you sonofabitch, in the head, that is. But since yer a reg'lar customer, you can have it fer free, on the house. Now g'wan . . . eat up." Betty mashed the insect through the top crust of the pie with her thumb, and stomped back toward the kitchen amidst the roaring laughter of the trucker's buddies at the counter.

The traveller shook his head solemnly, "Jeezus," and took a sip of his warm water.

Sam looked up with one eye, keeping the other on his sandwich, "What's that?"

"Christ, this place is a dump," the traveller spoke as if he were passing judgment on a new applicant to Heaven.

"What d'you mean, 'dump'?" Sam looked around the whitewashed interior as a truck growled North on Highway 81.

"Just look around; everything is either broken or dirty, or both. And the people . . . the place is a zoo . . . Jeezus Christ, hasn't anybody here ever heard of pride?"

A thin waitress with black teeth sauntered up to the table with pad and stubby pencil, shifted her hips to one side, and rested her weight on one skinny leg. "Yeah?" The traveller looked at his hands and fumbled with the silverware: "I'll have a cup of coffee, and some ap-, no, some cherry pie." She scribbled on the pad, unlocked her hip, and drifted toward the kitchen without saying another word.

"Pride?" Sam was wiping tomato juice from his chin, "Oh, they've got plenty of pride. You just walk up to one of those truckers, an' tell'm he's a slob . . . if you ever wake up again, you'll know what pride is."

"Okay, but what I mean is that I can't see how a crummy joint like this stays in business. Jeezus, it's sickening."

"Oh, you think maybe that Betty should paint and carpet, put in some soft lights and air conditioning, things like that?"

"Yeah."

"Well, she tried that once, about six years ago, after Casey died. She--"

"Casey?"

"Yeah, her husband, he used to own--"

Betty rushed by carrying an armload of steak and eggs to the bowlers, made a few jokes with them, and went back to the booths by the rest room. "Any you goddamn pre-verts want anythin'?"

One of the students stopped mauling a giant plate of beans long enough to mumble through a full mouth: "Yeah, man, more cornbread." Another added, "more French toast," and another, "more chili dogs." The whole row of booths seemed to come to life: "Hey, Betty, got any more Kool-Aid?" "More scrambled eggs," "more grilled cheese," "more french fries."

"SHUDDUP!" The whole place was silent until Betty's roar stopped bouncing off the walls. "I'll get a waitress over there when I get a chance, but in the meantime, you mangy bastards stay out o' my garbage cans, y'hear?" They laughed for a few minutes, and then resumed the attack of whatever lay on their plates.

On her way back to the kitchen, Betty gave Sam a wry smile. "Them damn hippies ain't human: each onevem eats more'n ten truckers. You boys doin' alright?"

"I'll have 'nother cup," Sam smiled back. Betty nodded and went into the kitchen.

"You were telling me about her husband," the traveller reminded Sam.

"Yeah, well, Casey used to run this place - didn't look much different than it does now - while Betty worked as a clerk over't the Beechcraft plant. She was different in those days, just as proper as she could be; went to church every Sunday, and drug Casey along whenever she could get him woke up.

"She never came in here much, not even to help ol' Casey. He'd spend the best part of twenty-four hours a day, six days a week right there behind that counter. Then, come two-o'clock Sunday mornin', he'd close up, pull a bottle out from under the counter, an' sit here and get drunk by himself. Then, he'd go home to catch a few hours sleep before openin' time Sunday night.

"Then one night, I 'member it like it happened yesterday, Casey just up an' keeled over, dead; heart attack. Some says that it was the liquor that killed him, but most of us knew that he had just worked himself to death."

"Jeezus . . ."

The skinny waitress brought two coffees and the traveller's pie, and wandered back toward the booths by the rest room. Several flies had already discovered the pie, and the traveller kept them at bay with his left hand while he cut with his right. "Then what?"

Memo #7

A few observations about our impending bicentennial.

The United States was a dream someone had while sleeping
on a Serta Perfect-Sleeper mattress.

The gods of Ahmenhotep and Paul Bunyan are one in the same.
We now worship the gods which propel Evel Knievel across the
Snake River Canyon.

The donkey dung between my toes itches.

The gorgeous trout which we once fished now flounder
like flounders in the desecration once called rivers.

But I know nothing because I am literate and feel the donkey
dung and am born of woman.

My assignment, should I choose to accept it, is to keep
my head above water and live as a warrior.

I have consulted my death. I have no time for crap.
None of us do.

A warrior's life is one of power and will.

My death tells me I will never become a warrior.

And my place of death will be a hospital.

Stephen Doss

Predilection: Forbidding Shopping

I went down to my favorite grocery store to
seek the products of my images.

I entered the womb of security through the
electric-opening doors.

Aha, I see you, Schopenhauer, prophet of a new clear age,
childless, lonely old grubber. I see you fondling the
pork chops of eternity. Don't preach to me about sex and
sin and Dream Whip. I know all about them.

I walk beside you, caressing the tomatoes of self-denial and
oogling at the price I must pay
for Cheerios and power.

He stands on the bank of the Lethe crying out for
me to swim across, but the water is filled with
the sewage of decadence and I fear of drowning.

Wait for me Arthur, I just have to pick up some
beer.

Nietzsche follows on my left, his scrawny body wavering
right and left, but I lost him as I turn down the
aisle to pick up a turnip.

Stephen Doss

The Dancer

The young man's dream was to dance. The liquid movement of the body mixed with the melodic sounds of music, to enact a feeling, or deeper, a meditation. After years of practice, arduous exercise, and self-discipline he made his debut to the world. Spinning, dipping, making jumps, oh so high and graceful, landing back on earth at the exact time, the exact note and without hesitation moving on to the next movement. Free in the music, his mind wandering with thought of cool breezes and placid blue skies while the tempo was light. Then building into a stormy mood with raging winds and black ominous clouds racing across the sky as the tempo became stronger, wilder, almost swept away by the mere thought of such movement. So beautiful the feeling, not of accomplishment, but the connection, the interaction of being one with the music, and the control.

Control? Was this control him? Was he in control of his movements, or had he just become so much a part of the music that his dancing became second nature? Fear, deep set fear began to filter into his consciousness. He could no longer control his movements. They became twisted and damaging to his spirit. The audience roared, applauded, and cheered with delight. Never had they seen such an enlightened display of dancing! To their feet applauding.

Applauding? Applauding while he cried; cried tears of fear, of pain, and of dismay. He was no longer dancing, only his body was dancing and with each movement his spirit ached. The inner pain grew and tore at his heart which by now was pounding.

Pounding, hurting, screaming with pain, dear God, surely they can see! Surely they can see my chest throbbing. The pain is so intense that I am blinded by it.

I am blind! I percieve not! How is it possible that I dance without sight? Surely I shall hit the wall or fall from the stage with my next movement. But still I dance, move with the music, if only I could stop dancing, if only my movement would stop. If only I could block out the music, cease to hear the music . . . hear? Hear what?

I cannot hear! The audience, the orchestra, my hearbeat, nothing. My senses gone, almost void am I, but this damn body will not stop dancing.

The body ceases only at death. Death would be worthy of contemplation at this point, but rather I would allow my spirit to dissipate, to leave. Leaving this accursed, almost mechanized, body to function on the least amount of energy necessary. For spirit without body would indeed be more complete than body and spirit together out of unison. The body needs control but the spirit needs peace, spiritual inner peace, and solitude. And only with this inner peace can the body be controlled completely and effectively.

The dancing of the body indeed is beautiful, but without the unison of spirit the dancing becomes incomplete and less perfect, leaving the dancer outside himself. And unless the connection of the body and spirit is remade the dancer will indeed remain apart from himself, never to dance again. Not even unto death.

--H. Harles

Yellow Ships

Sailing on yellow ships
with flowered sheets amast,
Venturing far with no limits
on mind or body.
Rolling gently on waves of energy
driven in our very souls.
From here to there and ever on.
Passing those whose minds will not allow
them to follow.
We are of now and then and we are
the future.

Still on we sail beneath a world we seek
above one we have left, deep deep
in our memory.
Never looking back, for what we have left
could never follow, but is better by
our passing.
But as we pass, to those who are able and
willing, our cry is, "Come." And they know.
And those who know will follow
And for those who can not follow we leave
our pages ourselves.
For we are those pages
on which we write, our being.

Sailing on yellow ships
with flowered sheets amast,
We are changing, we are the winds of change
blowing silently over the paths of men.

Mike Foster

Bottled up
first 2 days
Out again but one foot in the door

Then Crash

Bottled up
a week this time
Looking forward to the crate
forever.

Things sled down
with sluggish runners
so the grade's so slow it's months

Bottled up
Pretending
Speeding through routines
Doing normal things
Living for that magic in

tomorrow;

Bottled up in a crystal fog
so things stay fresh for torture
but reasoned out for sanity
and, put in right proportion,
sealed and labeled
Vintage Me.

Linda Dean

on the Dream

behind barred
doors of thought lies
the main strata
 (artifact
 energy
product of psychic
event, Kelly says

we cannot see
touch or control
only tap the source
to placate the
ceaseless hunger.

 it comes,
hidden as a steel
blade nestled inside
a sheath of
hide to penetrate the
heart of what is
desired & unknown
 --sometimes feared

it is with us
in avenues of thought
we are transformed into its
likeness.

the
body
fades. . . .the dream
 unveils
in last desperate
moments of physical
awareness as the precise
instant when the sun drops
& all is black

 (a glowing
radiance remains unseen &
carried by the wind as
seed to go back into
earth--absorb the element
take root
& be reborn
nurtured by the
main body of
 the dream.

we seek perfection
 --only with eyes
of crystal
have we a chance:
 dreaming;
 acting the dream;
 living the dream;
I am my dreams. . . .

R. Barnes

VIRTU

Hawk
brief most poised apparition
adrift below the hill

plowhorse in light blown snow

the space it fills
anything
is only where it is
its very visability

to find you
I have to find you

we talk things to bleak literalness

the words

cannot unword themselves
leap the track--
their tedious lineality

we must go outside
he said

& it is extraordinarily difficult
to go outside.

John Morgan

THE FACE

Each time you have struck me I have looked at
your face.

I saw your eyes
when you stoned me in the desert;
I looked at you
when you spat on me at Golgotha.
I remembered your face as I fell
on the Trail of Tears.
In Chicago, when you beat me,
I watched your mouth shape curses,
and I felt your rage vibrate in the jungle
before your bayonet separated my ribs.

Your face is a grey sentinel in my lives
and haunts my many deaths.
I die and die and die.
In the Coliseum you were ten thousand screaming
faces,
but always the same face:
always the face of fear.

Margaret Menamin

She looked at the patterned carpet--
worn and faded, tightly woven.

--Blima Wellek

The noise of the factory fell on deaf ears.
They were too busy listening to the sound of money.

--Marge Richards

A friend's best friend,
a careless car,
he finished the job with a rock.

--Steve Foltyn

Rocks creep under concrete, ruining with cracks.
Lightning, splitting limbs, strikes a tree.

--Joan Wyant

The Gecko

Translated from the Japanese of Rabassa by Elizabeth A. Schultz

When I was living alone in Matsue, one morning I went to roll back the sliding doors in the next room. The lamp on the desk was still burning there. I heard a ker-plunk sound, as if something had dropped on the tatami. It was a gecko. Making sure that he had found shelter under the desk, I opened the sliding doors. Outside, the morning sun was shining.

From the charcoal basket, I picked up a pair of cedar chopsticks which had replaced the metal ones and tried to chase the gecko out. His soft body wiggling away, he escaped. When he got as far as the threshold, I skillfully flipped him out. He seemed to freeze motionless by the stepping-stones. If I didn't kill him, I thought he'd be back again come dark. When I stepped down into the garden, he escaped again, but I seized him by the body with the chopsticks, scraping him harshly over the ground. With his soft body twisting around so, he wasn't about to die. I thought I'd pierce the top of his head when he became a little weak. After failing two or three times, I successfully pierced him in a spot just between the eyes on the crown of his head with one of the chopsticks. The tip of the chopstick was scorched black and pointed. The gecko struggled, flipping his tail about. I put a little more pressure into my pushing. He cried shrilly. Then, as I pressed down suddenly and more forcefully, one eye popped out. And then, when this happened, naturally, he opened his mouth in defiance. The inside was an extremely pale pink. The chopstick was poked down from the head to the throat. When I took it out, the gecko dropped sluggishly from its point. Even now, he wasn't completely dead. Yet because his body was only partially alive, his head having been pierced through the crown, he was as good as dead.

Although I thought I'd try to give the gecko's remains to the chickens next door for food, considering that they might be poisonous, I decided against it. Besides, every morning I was eating two of the eggs from the chickens next door . . .

Releasing his body from the chopstick, I tossed it into a corner of the garden. The chopsticks I tossed over the low brushwood fence onto the pathway.

About thirty minutes later, I was eating my breakfast, sitting cross-legged near the edge of the verandah. I noticed a single sparrow repeatedly poking at something and shaking it about in the corner of the garden. Looking closely, I saw that it was a small voiceless cicada. Although the cicada was batting its wings, it no longer had any strength to escape. I wondered what had happened to the gecko. Finishing breakfast, I went out to look for his remains. The surprised sparrow escaped with the cicada in his mouth.

The gecko was living all this time. One eye was still out, and the hole was still in his crown; as I came closer, he began to escape by weakly, weakly walking away. I was overcome by a sudden disgust. I might have been happy with the gecko's resurrection if I had thought that he might have been able to be restored completely and naturally to what he had been before. But I didn't think he could. I experienced simultaneously a feeling of anger and foreboding. This time I put on my sandals of thin bamboo strips which hardly seemed capable of trampling on a creature just returned to life. Then I considered taking him to the moat and sinking him. With a bamboo broom, I tried to sweep him up to the moat. I didn't exert so much force, but unexpectedly, with a single sweep, the gecko, as if jumping with his own strength, entered the thicket of bog-rhubarb growing about the roots of the fig tree which faced on the moat. My eyes, however, couldn't clearly discern his path. I tried searching for him with care. I combed carefully through the leaves of the rhubarb with the broom. I looked into the moat. I shook a branch of the fig tree from which two small green frogs fell into the moat and they hurriedly swam back to the stone wall again. I once more patiently investigated the densely grown rhubarb. I couldn't find the gecko after all.

I could imagine the gecko with one eye and a hole in his head crawling back again into my room at night. I quickly put an end to these imaginings. However, the fact that the gecko lived seemed a disaster to me. I felt my spirits cloud over.

But fortunately this was the day on which I'd planned to go to Daisen in the Hōki area for about half a month. I asked the young carpenter next door and his wife to look after my house for a little while in my absence and headed for the train station.

CHRISTOGRAPHIA XXIX

"The man of light was the door to the universe"

--George MacDonald

track & playback
of the world's flow--

record's spiral groove & needle,
holograph & laser light,
score, musician & instrument--

the imagination's coherent light
flooding the world's swirls & snarls

illuminated from every side,
shredded & still whole, each fragment
bearing the Message

we inhabit ourselves as the rainbow the sky
the Spirit descending illumines
our contours, broken patterns

cat's cradle of lightning
Jacob's ladder of flesh--

body-mind woven in & to the world,
all things whole
in the Spirit's harmonic flash

Gene Warren

Rituals

Alone,
she lit the candles,
an act of community.

The steaming broth warms and fulfills.

The hair covers her head like a pale shawl
as she sits,
the day of rest.

Blima Wellek