

Mag City #1

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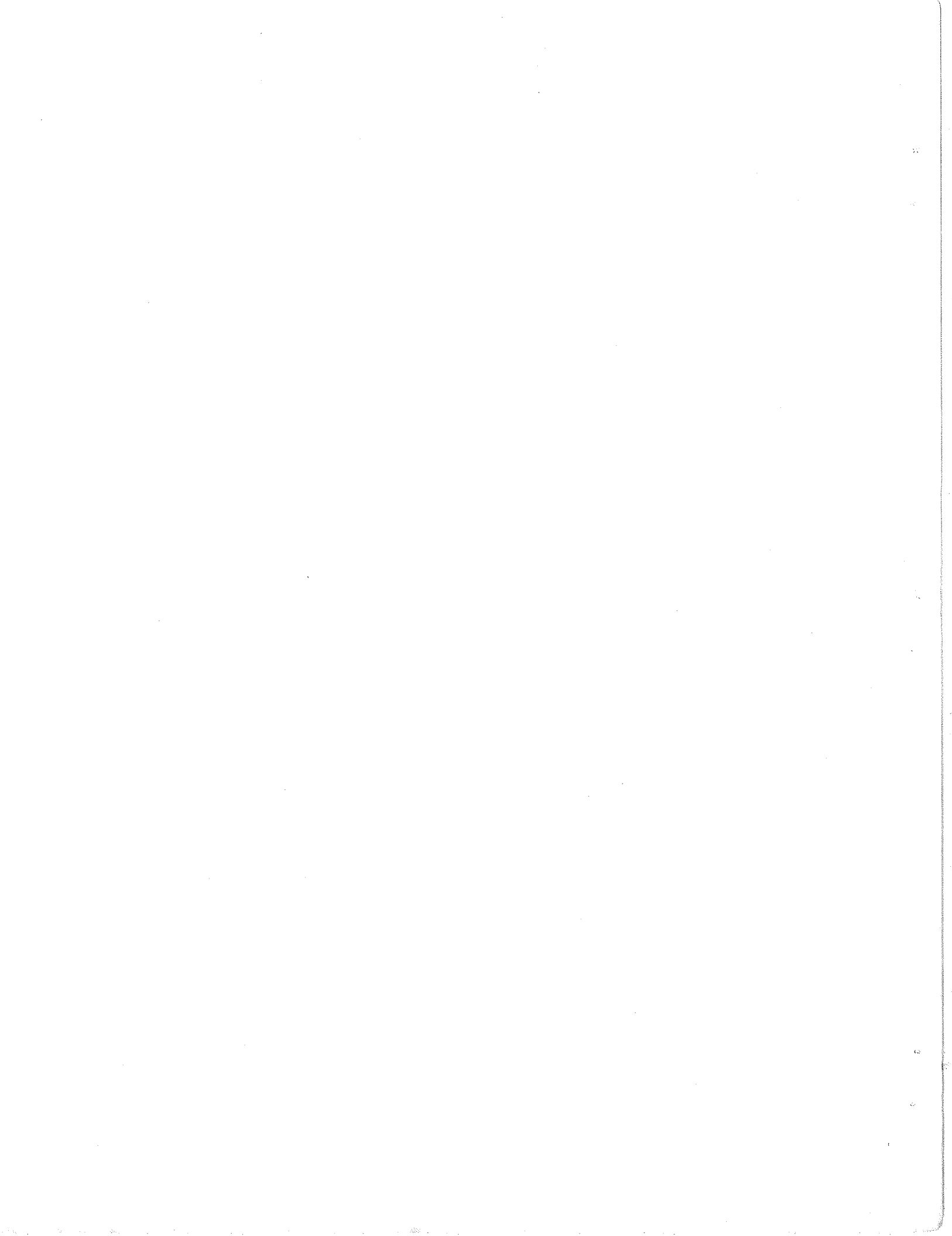
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Ellen Myles

### Cigarettes

Emotions are like clothes. As I'm putting mine on and you're taking yours off. Today I wore total blue. And what I was selling was blue. I kept them in a blue bag and I didn't sell a thing. People passing by admiring all the blue. Every morning

I throw cigarettes under the faucet. Every night I'm licking salt from my fingers, ketchup from my clothes. I can see good reasons for why MacDonalld's exists. Constant stage for our provocations to dance from. Andy Warhol said it would be nice if all the cars were black. Creative fascist pure beauty of streams of black traffic. And all the brightly colored people coming in and out of cars. Cigarettes are my pet degradation. I smoke them so much that everything's smoke. Then I stop and breathe up the excess. Do you need a match? The tic and the tac go shrugging and then you get toe. Fourteen cigarettes under the faucet.

Song on My Oud for Willem de Kooning

I raise my pear-shaped instrument  
and I will play for you, Bill. Each note  
is a twangy heart throb and I hope you enjoy  
my twanging thunks. Bill, In thanks for all the color  
I'm trying to paint your ears. I want to pour  
a bucket of soundlings across your tympanum.  
I want your percussive co-operation. Also  
as you're closing your eyes I hope my thunks  
from Marrakech from Zanzibar the dead ghosts  
of countries on obsolete maps  
Estonia Latvia Lithuania  
or songs of countries I just made up  
Economia Lower Andromedea  
I hope my thunkings awaken these lands  
...Bill, I think we should collaborate on a color.  
Somewhere between the sound of your orange and  
the hue of my thunkings  
titled perhaps, The Decoded Opera of the All Deaf  
& Blind Chromosome Brigade. For a dry run  
we can whisper it  
in the ears of sleeping bankers. On various  
Wednesdays.

## Aural History

All 86 of my albums have skips on them. Outside  
Sirens are wailing. One  
Child is crying.  
Two are laughing. Someone's phone  
Is violently ringing. The wind  
Lightly wallops the loose  
Casements and once  
In a while I turn  
When it really sounds  
Like assault. Cars honking.  
One dog barks. Some  
Kids are really cheering. Down  
The street the MacDougal  
Street polls are jammed  
And one by one people  
Step behind the grey  
Curtain, pull down the  
Red handle, the curtain  
Shuts and they make their secret vote  
For who will be the next  
President of the  
United States of America.  
I debate if I will eat  
After this drink  
And if I will go out, if  
He calls. One truck honks  
Like a goose in an  
Echo chamber. And now  
I can even hear the  
Trains.

## Thirteen Strange Urges

she reeks of goodness  
still her heart is a glossy black bowling ball  
Anna Bliss Beasley donated this room  
why is the volume raising  
I already went to lunch so I'll save you the time  
in fact I'll go for you now  
gave my teevee away  
now now on ought to be there for myself  
whenever whenever whenever  
do pigs have wings  
I grow icecube nodes yet learn to love everyone  
I would be green in a rock-garden  
do bears shit in the woods



## Onwards Upwards & Always

Nobody could deny no other bad times.  
An electric torch as a matter of course, a mixed blessing.  
Marvelously up to date, June 10th.  
33 dogs under the sea. They had slept in their clothes.  
"This entailed."  
In a fortnight they were obliged to spend a second summer  
In the hut under the active volcano. 25 of them  
Living there, really ill, complaining of stuffiness  
And too many lectures; 3 a week.  
Trustful by nature, sun-up was by 7. Cherry Garrard,  
Sometimes a latin dictionary, is not a complete answer.  
They said no. Their loyalty to each other was fantastic.  
Full of light and shade, no beer.  
Very funny indeed.  
Hooker died that very year, 1911. An adorable person,  
The egg of an emperor. Paternity  
Is the only joy. Indiscriminately breaking and killing  
in the process.  
On the coast everybody volunteered for everything.  
They steered by Jupiter, the simplest action. I hope I have not  
Disappointed him, a party of four.  
Meant for four. He had eaten most of the dogs,  
A hot stew, the bold way in which he met his death.  
Now the weather changed, ordinary good luck.  
My dear Mrs. Wilson: he died as he lived. The sun  
Reappeared terribly soon  
Smiling into cupboards.

## The Nude Bombardier

Morning after the reading and  
I find myself fully clothed in bed  
silvery jersey sans jungle necklace  
no boots  
green combat pants Christmas sox  
Whoops! Guess I got smashed again.  
Trying to pull that one together  
I call my boss, a sympathetic lady.  
She says, "It's OK. Call it a sick day."  
I sure will. So  
I'm making coffee I'm cutting a  
grapefruit to wake my tongue up  
I'm stirring oatmeal, stomach-  
ballast I drop a few  
Anacin.  
I'm walking around naked  
like a nude bombardier.  
Gary & I discussed marriage  
last night. Why not.  
I'm 27 & it's slightly embarrassing  
that I've never "been"  
married. I don't yep for the  
state so much, but its nostalgia  
sounds terribly adult.  
"I been there, Man."  
Anyhow, that would happen Wednesday.  
This is only Tuesday so I've got plenty  
of time to decide.  
And I can walk around naked all day  
if I want. Like a nude bombardier.  
Slowly I'm landing.  
The headache's vanishing. My cat has  
relaxed and is lying down.  
The disc-jockey plays a song  
from the first eagles album called "Mr. Big."  
Now he sounds alright.  
I like rock & roll more every day.  
Unlike the time when I could not  
possibly state "I like rock & roll."  
It just was. Marriage  
too was comprehended differently.  
It wasn't a state. It was,  
"I want this man so bad

I'd like to marry him & make it  
permanent      Should I get pregnant?"

So,  
the nude bombardier walks slowly  
through Tuesday considering  
marriage      clothed  
in self-conscious rock & roll.

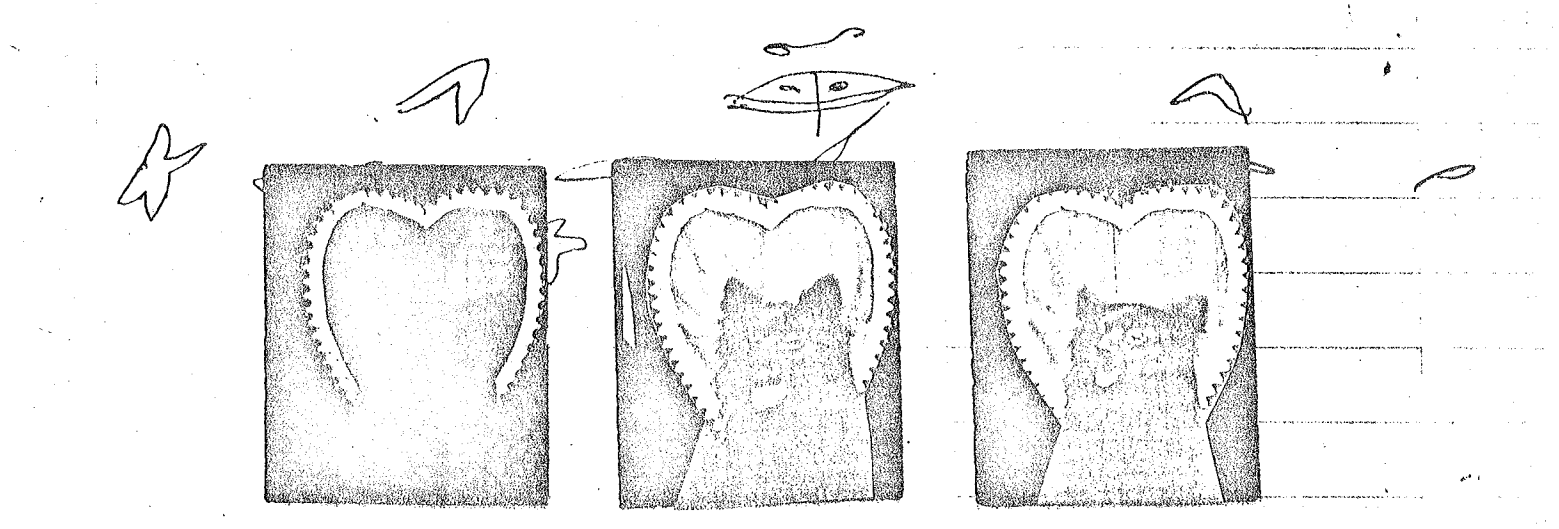
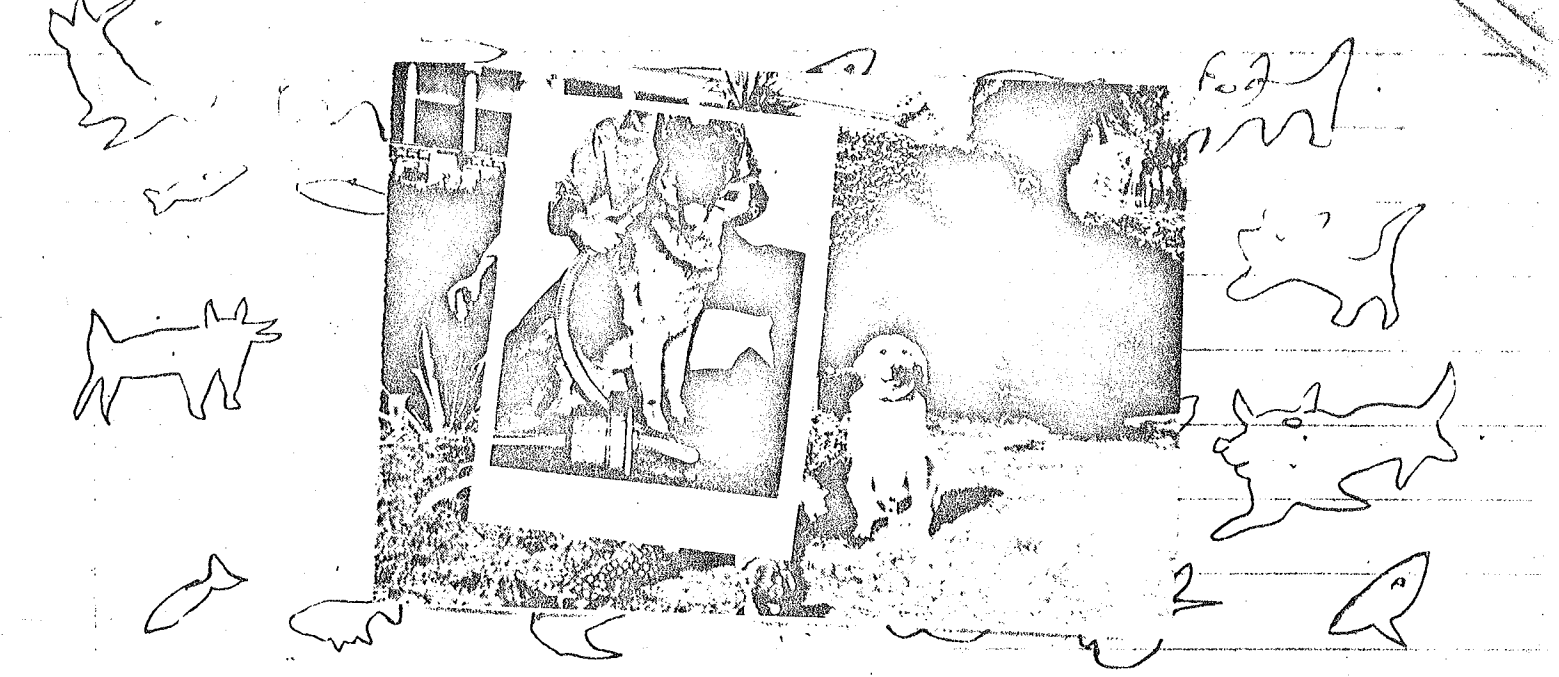
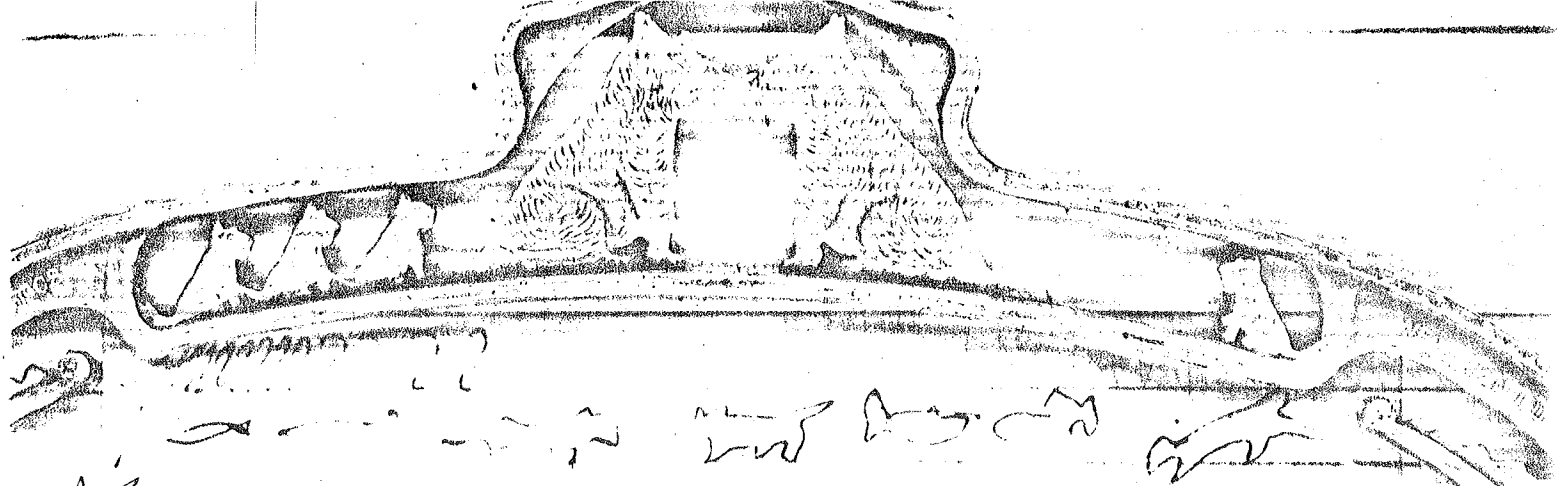
How droll.

"The nude bombardier"

She weighs in at 126.

Let Me Put It This Way

If I didn't know you what famous historical personage  
Might your changing visage call to mind.  
Why does an image of Ulysses S. Grant keep shouting  
Itself  
Across my weltanschauung like a Top Forty song?  
Dwell on that, Space Man. I also keep seeing  
A classical baseball, one corner of its scarface  
Hanging loose as it sails...  
Ozymandias occurring on "78" while the other three speeds  
Are only functional. O Space Man!  
Does any of this make sense?  
Will I recognize you among flocks of birds  
Or the latest kids rushing the water-fountain?  
And why, as I gaze at my favorite group portrait  
Multiple image careens to the left  
Speeding off to the right, as if  
New moves are the star of the day...  
Comet me that, you infinity dullard.



Miguel Algrin

December 2, 1976

Early morning bell rings me out of sleep,  
I jump into army khakis kicked off my feet  
in late night sleepy haste to drop off consciousness  
and sink into dreamless, neck muscles too tight  
to rest sleep, after a night of tossing loose  
limbs from side to side an early morning electric buzz  
of my bell pulls me to my door,  
I first peek through the edge of an army green shade  
that blinds street eyes from staring  
into my inners,  
it's Eddie and Leroy,  
I open the door, "¿qué pasa?"  
"Sorry bro but we heard you died."  
"I'm dead?"  
"Yes."  
"I'm here."  
"You are."  
"Thanks."  
I close my door, feed the cat and turn to bed again,  
a shower, morning phone calls and hours later  
I walk to the Orpheum Theatre where Maritza smiles  
and acts surprised that I'm alive,  
"We thought you'd died and Bimbo said  
it happened just when you were beginning  
to do all that there is to do,"  
"I'm here, cold, hungry and on the planet,"  
"I'm glad,"  
she said smiling her feelings at me,  
leaving I take the "A" train to Brooklyn  
where I visit Lois and Pedro gathering energy  
I travel back to Manhattan where Raúl meets me  
as I'm paying the cab,

Algrin/10

"I left the equipment inside,  
but your landlord Felix told me you died,"

"Felix, Raúl, told you I died?"

"Yeah, he went in there and knocked then he  
and the other guy went upstairs and the  
other guy asked Felix if you had died."

"Raúl, I'm here."

"I see. I see. Coño bro pero,"

"Pero, pero what? I just told you I'm here."

"I'm glad bro. I'm glad."

"I'm glad too."

December 2, 1976:

I'm born. Just born.  
Died in somebody's mind.  
I did, I died in somebody's mind.  
But I'm here all, all, perhaps,  
too much alive for somebody's mind  
because in mine I'm still in body form  
and that, perhaps, is much too much  
alive, perhaps, in somebody's mind.

December 2, 1976: Miguel in montage

Cut ups. Somebody should do  
a cut up of my limbs and reassemble,  
just to see if my subliminal levels  
surpass the sequential order  
of present muscle co-ordination.



December 3, 1976: early morning bus

It was easy to get up,  
I'd only had four hours sleep  
but the will was strong and the engine in tune,  
building boiler broke down during the night  
so the glass of water left on typing table froze  
but the will motored muscles into coordinated movements,  
didn't try to shower since there was no body odor,  
threw clothes on, took cab to Port Authority  
got on the 8 o'clock bus to New Brunswick,  
read about Duberman's Kerouac theater piece,  
fell off to sleep on back seat,  
woke just in time to pull coat on,  
pull cord and move to the front of bus,  
got off at Landing Lane Bridge,  
walked across, waited for a Campus Bus  
but got a ride instead,  
walked rapidly to school,  
entered creative writing room and started to listen  
to all that was read.

November 15, 1976

Another count down,  
the fissionable material:  
    5 kilograms of U235  
are on the way  
and I find love in open  
furnaces radiating heat  
that loosens my tight,  
tighter than tight muscles  
from the homemade marmalade  
that is my mind as it  
articulates fears about who's  
going to build the first homemade  
atom bomb while my mild lady's desire  
seduces me away from Theodore Taylor's  
paranoia about rapists, muggers  
and psychos following the process  
to make plutonium fuse up  
and let the fire of hell  
free to detonate reality into shrubbe.

## Plutonium Mist

Raw atoms in flux,  
stainless metal love  
full of rust dust,  
I pronounce the finger switchblades  
that you caressed my feverish face with,  
the source of uranium and plutonium,  
raw atomic information for the having,  
secrets stolen lead to execution,  
raw atomic information,  
France and Pakistan knock on senior  
Princeton undergraduate door  
looking for precious detonation information,  
burn the will to hate, let all private knowledge go,  
if hate perseveres beyond the will to survive  
then let wrath digest the full flower of atomic fruits  
and blow the ordered sequence of this moment,  
erupt it into nail sharp shards that poison  
on contact the live tissue of all that lives.

## An Intentional Beginning

Before the beginning there was a beginning,  
a long intentional beginning  
travelling in feathers of ink swiped time,  
caught in the meanderings of a sentence  
referring the infernal message of Raskolnikov's  
need to be punished for the killing deed  
that crippled his solo god-flight  
into taking human life,  
Raskolnikov, your guilt crippled you to the detective's  
blood thirsty drive to pin the killer,  
Raskolnikov's Russia driving intelligence to homicide,  
now at night I wash my soul of ingrained hatred  
before sleep catches me in Dostoevsky's snow white nights  
where motives to invent, to stretch the world  
become demonic dives into bloody terror and despair  
in between the solitary sheets of a solitary I in bed  
with his overdeveloped love of paranoia and guilt,  
before the beginning there was a beginning in self-love  
but soon it became self-doubt,  
self-destruction  
and self-consumption inside the bee-hive of nuclear guilt  
that a fully efficient Greek-Orthodox Russian church  
instilled deep, down, on the other side of Raskolnikov's cranium  
where a long intentional beginning was caught in an icon  
of the nativity.

## Saliendo

Moving out on the sidewalk, leaving my inner cranium living room space to regenerate while external living keeps energy flow becoming muscular volcanic eruptions, saliendo, coming out, moving out, looking around, shaping, responding to children screeching their love at Kojak as he leaves "Paco's Antique Tienda" wearing his navy blue cashmere overcoat, dark blue velvet hat and gold-rimmed shades.

Kojak's down on sixth street! stepped right out of the boob-tube, settling crime on New York streets, arriving just in time to catch the punk by the collar and make him pay for wrongs he's done, children screech when they see Kojak,

they move out of inner-livingroom

space to shout arrows of joy at Kojak, to touch him, to feel illusion harden into fact in their presence,

Kojak in the living room of actual space and time,

illusion become reality, hero become matter,

touchable, sensual time, Kojak's here! Same as T.V.

saliendo, coming out of myself, out of my T.V. image of self,

out of my inner self, out, out, out of myself,

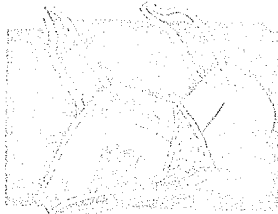
out, out onto the sidewalks of my astral projections

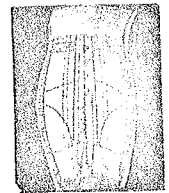
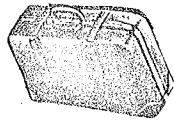
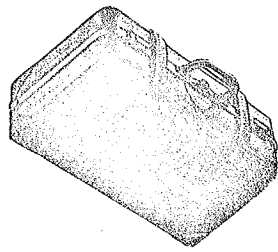
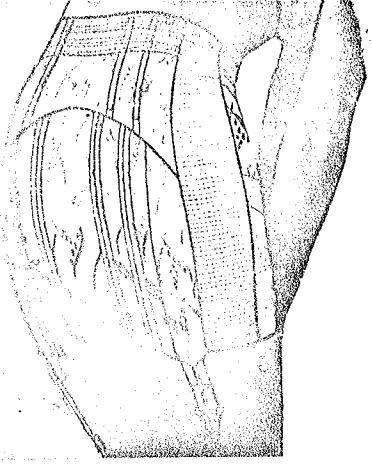
where I'm Kojak with a Flash Gordon electronic gun

that shoots arrows of art through villainous hearts,

saliendo.....saliendo.....saliendo,

leaving my inner cranium living room space to regenerate.





*Michael Scholnick*

Catskill Song And Dance

When Hank Williams sings  
    "Like a piece of driftwood on the sea  
    May you never be alone like me"  
I don't compare him to Shakespeare  
I say "that's beautiful"  
and play it again

What's in store for America?  
Higher prices? Years of my poetry?  
A renaissance of pretense and fascism?  
The scholarship of shadows?  
Love syndicated and blest  
as uninspired businessmen consume the nation tolerating words?

I'm so glad to learn what spirit is  
Now I'm not hungry  
I'm a disciple peeling an orange  
I'm he who sits on steps  
watching the rain fall  
wishing to feel relieved  
After a while I'm back inside  
thinking the same old thoughts

Solitary as a Russian novel  
I hang my head in sorrow

Sorrow? I can't finish with sorrow  
Not after Frank O'Hara  
His selected self collected in my kitchen  
Fast? Man he was fast  
He was so fast he's dead  
He was faster than a day or a shower  
Faster than the Middle Ages and faster



At work  
No one wants to take out the garbage  
The waitresses just won't do it  
and are allowed not to  
They yell "Garbage" when the bag is full  
And someone  
Could be me  
Steps out front

And when I step out the back door  
And toss the dripping goods over the black rail  
Into the green bin perfect!  
I look around  
And sometimes I can see the moon

## Seymour's Coffee Shop

Kenny, the sandwich man, is sixteen.  
He's reading *The Godfather* and asks me, "What's Hell's Kitchen?"

Shelly, Kenny's sister, is eating french fries.  
Showing me her *Cosmopolitan* she says,  
"No one thinks the model is that pretty."

Hal says he read some Freud and learned,  
"Girls like it as much as boys."

Barry's a photographer.  
He's been reading *The Sun Also Rises* for a month.

Elyse just broke up with her hometown boyfriend,  
"a possessive creep."

Her mother's upset.  
She's reading *A Kind Of Rape* "just to pass the time."  
It's a novel about a psychiatrist and a model.

Barbra is quiet.  
One postcard from her boyfriend in three weeks.  
Her uncle's Postmaster General of Loch Sheldrake.  
She's reading in *Redbook*  
Dr. Spock's *Opinion*  
On *The Effects Of Nudity On Children*.

Wendy's playing solitaire.  
She lives up here all year.

Seymour's mother is cashier.  
She gets all her books from the library.  
"Everyone's always talking about Tennessee Williams.  
Thought I'd try one. Couldn't finish the damn thing,  
Which is rare for me."

Seymour enters and says to me, "Go out to my car  
and bring in a carton of tomatoes."  
In his trunk a few Mickey Spillane novels.  
When I come back he's eating  
A double cheeseburger on a hoagy with grilled onions.

Plato's in my pocket.  
The part about knowledge and memory.

For Irwin Heilner

Experience is disappointing,  
that's why life's absurd.  
I learned this watching you shave  
lecturing about Beethoven  
and prison reform  
Polite man bathrobed  
standing in your livingroom  
I was company  
"...and all we can do," you said,  
finger scanning skin neck cheeks  
feeling baby red smooth skin,  
"Is punish, punish, punish."  
Now finding a hair then clipping  
delicately  
with a conductor's wrist

Wisdom flows in your speech  
of an art to consciousness  
heavier than Beethoven's fist  
Amazing how he tamed such wildness  
ordering blue soldiers in blue chariots  
to march around the white Chinese teacup of his mind  
How zapped with power he lifted his wrath  
above the birds and clouds  
above Napoleon's imagination  
And smashed antiquity  
dropping Quartets 14 15 & 16  
on God's porcelain tongue

For you a musician  
An eccentric librarian  
whose deepest thoughts  
dwell dusty and unpublished  
The eternal is fierce and now  
Who can deny your chilly chords?  
For you scores of inspiration  
Manuals cartons of sage sense  
A humble universe  
The science of your soul  
in an unknown basement  
on Dawson Avenue  
in Clifton, New Jersey

## Sonny Liston

I-hand  
L-ox-goad  
N-fish  
O-eye  
S-tooth  
T-mark  
Y-hook

Hand fish eye  
tooth mark hook  
O boy Sonny Liston

In my mind  
I link his death  
with the death of Mama Cass

Mystery surrounded Sonny's death  
He died in a motel room  
So did Mama  
eating her last lonely sandwich  
farting blood becoming philosophy

And Sonny  
found overdosed dead  
in his raging rented bed  
a corpse of contracts  
fame in his drunken Las Vegas eyes

If I dreamt of myself  
fighting mighty Sonny  
Laugh would stun global consciousness  
if I asked, "Are you the tooth fairy?"  
And him fairly hooking my teeth  
into the canvas of the ceremonial ring

And if the world were as compassionate as dreams  
Mama would have put down her turkey doom  
Not down her throat where it got stuck  
murdering luck on the set of America's bedrooms

And if we understood fall  
more than a season of Neilson ratings  
Sonny's death would rise in our universe  
He'd be a God in the cataract  
of our Bicentennial slop  
His life would tell a vision  
if we were innocent songs

His was the fate of the whale  
poisoned by a simple need  
Suffocated in a world turned hook  
by enormous men drinking greed

## Fade Out

I see myself  
in past cities  
in past plans  
I see best in conversation  
I saw myself on video a few times  
outside 42nd Street theatres

I see myself on television  
I never saw myself on television  
I saw Sam Rivers on First Avenue  
I never saw Sam Rivers in concert  
I got lost all over Manhattan one night  
looking for his studio in the rain

One night I wept and trembled  
listening to Beethoven stretch his mouth  
I saw clear ear vistas being dreamed

Today I bought some yams  
counted pennies left  
bought an onion

I see myself reading Keats  
recording his vision rhythms on my cassette  
listening back days later  
spaced out in livingroom  
Greg visiting one day

Keats lived a rather quiet life  
his father died in a riding accident

his brother emigrated to America  
and settled in Kentucky

From Here And Now

hard edge of what you are  
woman keeping her sanity  
without painting her nails  
out of the shower into summer  
twisting dull days into choices  
buying new guitar strings

it's hot in here  
and all the windows are open

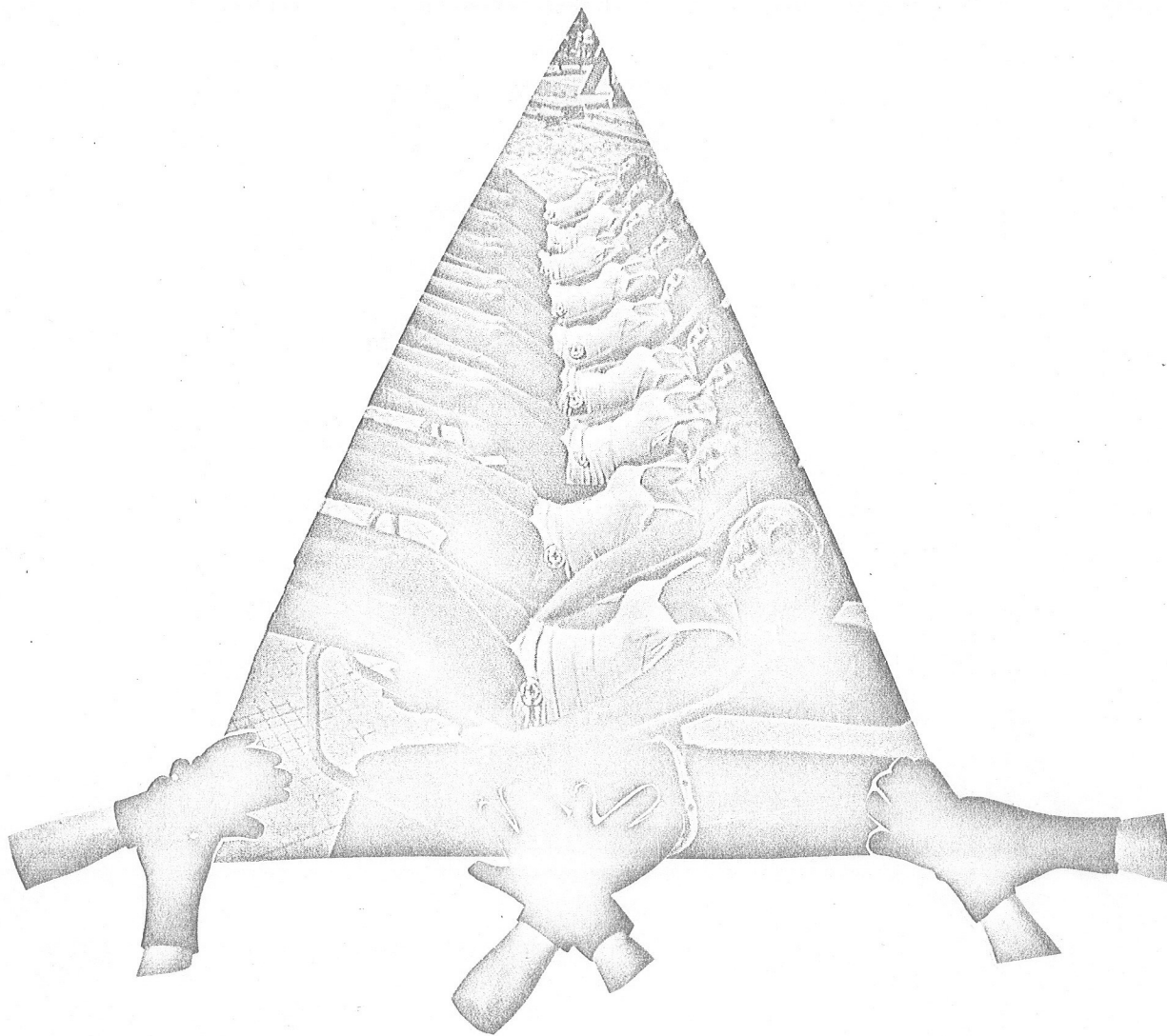
your mediterranean eyes swim  
in the important new plant  
of your \$13 layer cut  
i dive over an abyss of kisses  
spreading the memory of your high cheekbones

are we in the same world  
or just in the same room  
in the same room you say  
casting out doubt

## Field Trip

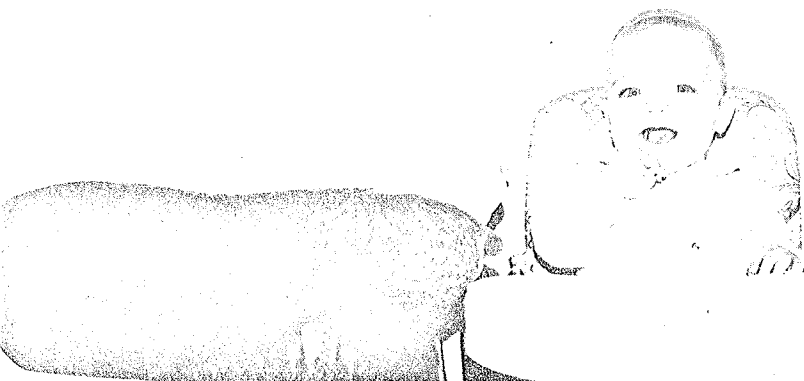
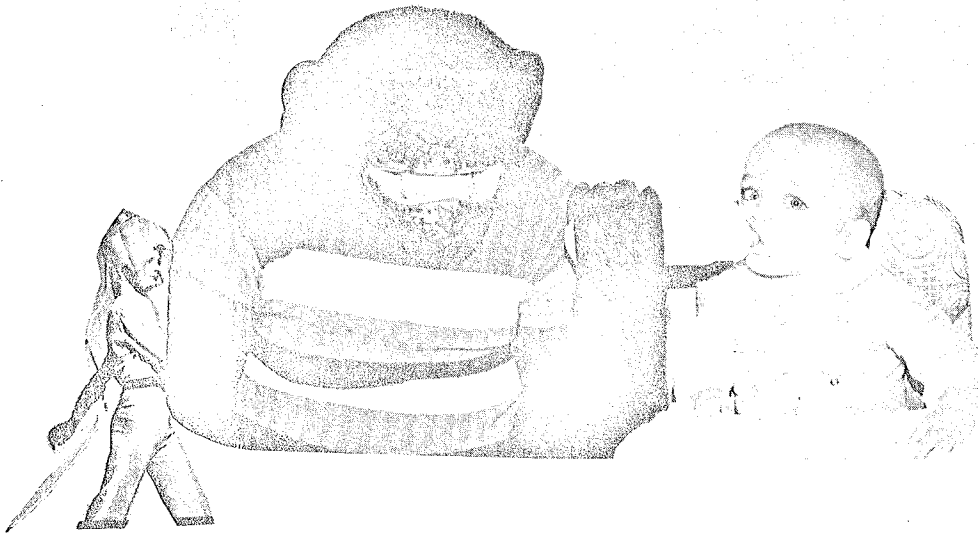
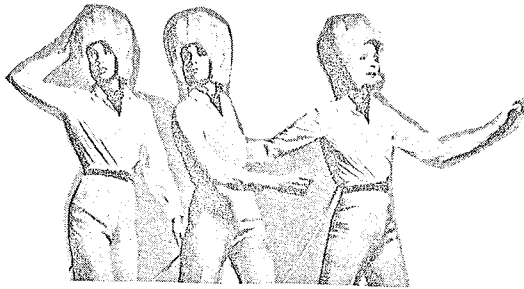
words are international energy  
yours take off like a menu of everything  
an aura unravelling my horrid scope  
into a straight dialogue line  
the architecture is serene  
the german tourists have a roadmap and a camera  
see that column no windows pure mass in the breeze  
is it an american camera you ask  
discarding observation for fact  
though you don't speak german  
you've been to france  
and can recognize a good picture  
over someone's shoulder when you see it  
i have to go travelling you're right  
so we leave the u.n. plaza  
its blazing green swarm  
bowling my thoughts into the east river  
i have to get sunglasses you say  
and disappear like a cigarette







Mr. Jiggs really loves my baby



*Regina Beck*

I kiss a sparrow  
on the beak  
As he cruises through the air  
I watch him  
like a speck

\*

\*

the umbrella  
hides my tear  
in a raindrop  
of blood  
and pain  
in  
my fantasy  
of green earth  
that collects the dirt

Huge squares stand in front of me  
I am washed away by the sound of your arm  
Sweeping my soul up to the sky  
And placing it gently on a cloud

Where I see the earth spinning  
It was meant for me + thousands of others  
Rolling around in the stoney field of life

I wander to the edge  
And grab hold of a grasshopper  
And touch his tiny leg  
As he clears the ground for animated suspension in air,

Where we spill a sigh of relief  
In the wake of his return  
And the like-wise return  
of all the ants + other bugs

as they make their way  
into the green halls  
of truth + beauty  
above the mud

## II

and bristles  
over scattered coats of paint  
we call landscape  
reaching out beyond the hills + valleys

in the sunset of an azure skyline  
i hold my secret  
+ give it to you  
when the moon is wise

the secret of birth  
that bursts out of my blubbering mind  
that gawks at thoughts that churn

and appear in earth's contractions

The tub is out of order  
I paid my dues  
but the drain don't work  
and I'm stuck with a barrel of water  
like a humid sandbox  
without air  
you just have to sit  
and sink

\*

\*

I read the paper  
The Daily News  
with pictures  
it spreads all over my table  
I walk on my hands to see it  
It's all very backwards.

The subway train sits with me in the station  
I watch patiently as it rolls in  
I drink whiskey that they serve you on the billboards  
And throw up breakfast waiting for the local  
With the music from The Fantastics clanging in my ear -  
    hung over from my midnight dreams  
When a cat meowed into my vision as I lay deep in sleep  
I thought it was a parakeet  
Three handsome Wallstreeters were sitting across from me  
    in their plaid and striped vested suits  
I thought they were from a musical show - maybe Stop The World.

The Oreo Cookie  
Stuck  
to the roof  
of my mouth  
in plain English

English -  
A language  
I shall cherish  
till March winds  
send their flowering  
baskets  
of cherry buds  
for me to eat  
each spring

In spring  
I fill my  
fountain  
of word reserves  
with cloudlike formations  
in the scent of  
cherry blossoms -  
ready to flower  
over the heads  
of state officials  
all over the world

The telephone  
rang  
in my ear  
I was deaf  
I hate noise  
New York, you ring too loud  
You blow my cool  
When I try to listen to nice music  
You spit out your pollution  
In my gut I get a poem  
Haltingly  
I  
stop  
after  
every  
word  
like that and then it gets quiet, and I can hear my  
    mind's grumblings  
stampedes of notes  
Cars that gurgle.  
Trucks that snore  
Dogs that harp away on my quickly vanishing sanity  
My intelligence - torn to shreds



A short story begins with a time and place. For the first time, I call upon the short setting as we snuggle up and listen to what there is to know about the so-called "Winter Breeze Story" of 1977 - New York City.

A winter bear came to call on us a few months back; this is now February 15, a day after so-called Valentine's Day. In a little while we shall all feel the cold air upon our skins and rush into our small apartments and wrap ourselves in sheets and blankets until the blood runs back in our souls to remind us of summer and warm times we've known. I can't say for sure but running a temperature is the last thing anyone can put their finger on, in terms of making a real situation.

In the meantime, all we can talk about is how dirty the City streets become after a thaw. Shuddering in our filthy clothes and dirty socks, we reminisce about how clean things can be when times are better. In a way, all any of us can think about is the temperature and how we shudder in the face of the low.

A report stating the new messages about the freezing stay of mercury climbs into the starting position. We almost view it as a sports event, a competition, wondering when the fall will start and if there is any cleavage in sight. Nobody is any the better or worse for false predictions, however, a false hope could cause tears and bitter thoughts.

On to the shopping mall for a bit of diversion. Eating lunch causes our palates to freshen up, our eyes to bulge a bit. Everything looks OK from a Luncheonette; it's just when you step outside that the going looks and feels strange, often uncomfortable. The protective all-weather condition proof shield container that makes living a one-temperature ideal reigns. We go out of the Luncheonette, or store, for example, and wait for a voice to call and report a change in wind velocity. How many times have we waited for a new scope to envelop our souls? Waiting outside in a shopping mall is like waiting in a dream. Nothing ever happens except man-made changes. The weather is just a passing fancy.

We all want to hide and not face the terrible storms that threaten to take away our inhibitions. We look up to the sky and anticipate a short story for our own when we notice that a crack in the heavens is stirring and a cloud storm is heading downward into our eyes as we stare. Is there room in this story for a hot chocolate? I have to drink one, myself.

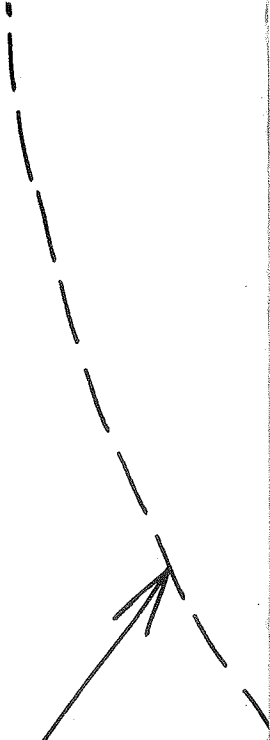
It's rather hot out, now. How is that? Well, I got situated in the Pan Am Building, and the breathers here are standing around letting out hot air in their conference rooms. And I am their receptionist. I kiss their cheeks and wait for calls to come in to give them their due in a matter of time. It's all very clear to me. I pick up the phone when the bell dilates and receive the message as it becomes clear.

In the face of all my work, I still find time to work.

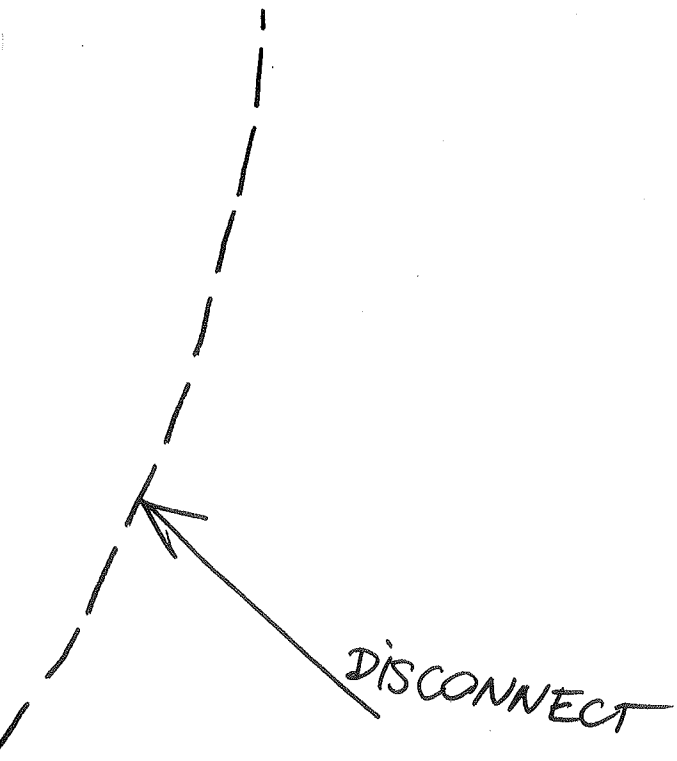
Sitting in the waiting room, I fill out stacks of Revenue Questionnaires, not really, but I like the way that sounds: official; office-like; what you should do.

Something just happened. I took a sip of my coffee and a man popped out and when I asked him to explain himself, he just shook his head and said he was on his way to a meeting. I smiled up front, but he looked kind of unsure of himself.

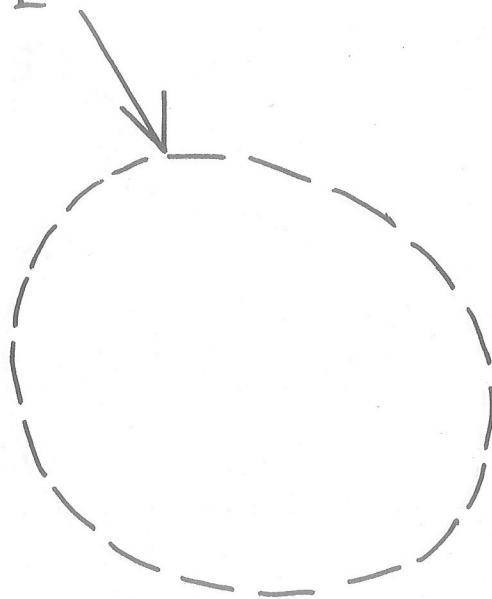
I want to do my job right, but I know that when it gets hot and the going gets heavy (I love clichés), I often fuck up. I mean, I have a lot on my mind, and if a person comes in looking for a particular executive, I've got to put the slammer on my joyous activities and look out for the other person. It gets to be tedious, so I wait for a coffee break to cut up the inconvenience, and then I go home. You can't win.

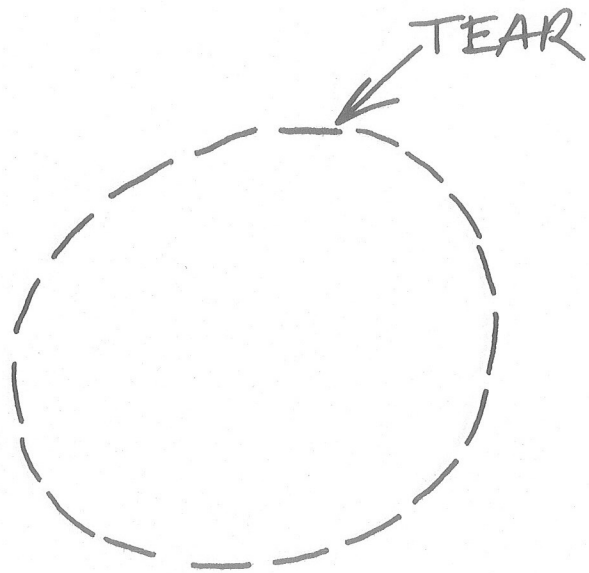


TEAR



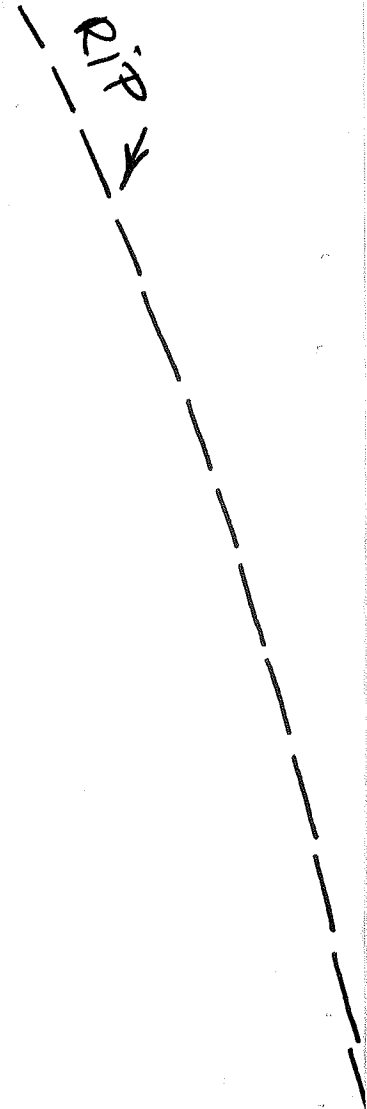
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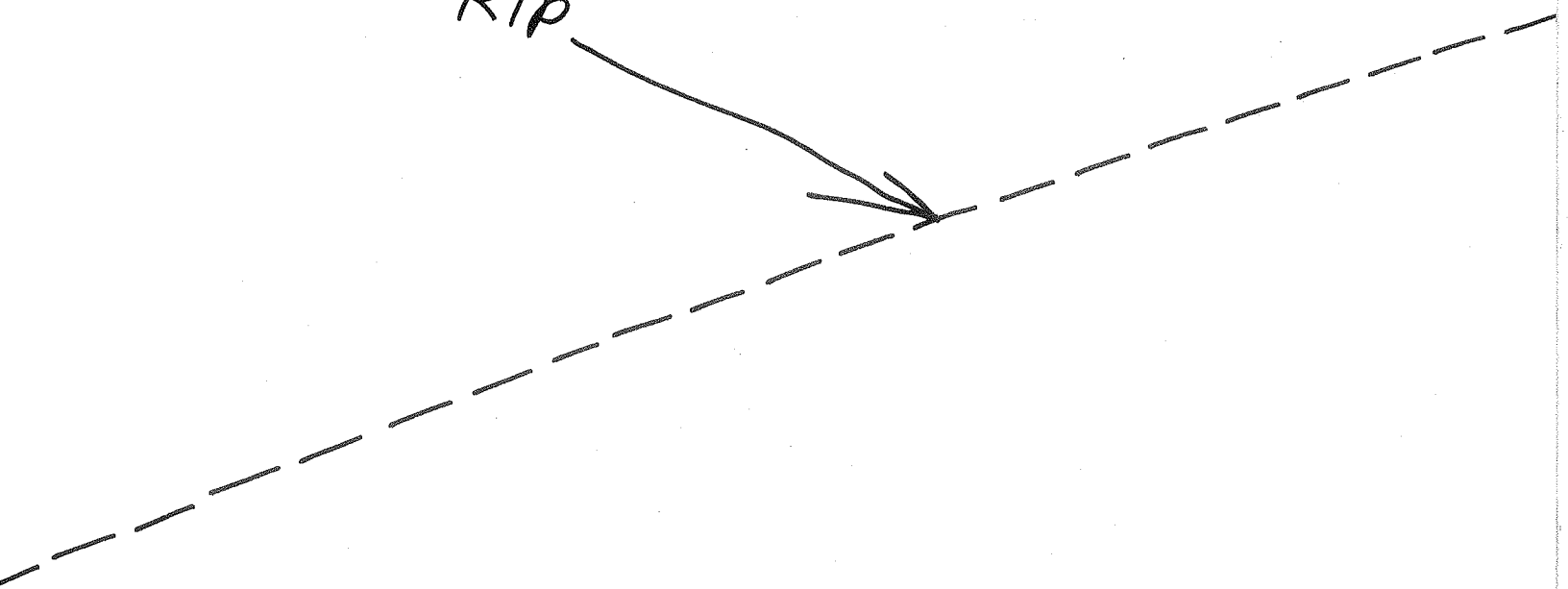
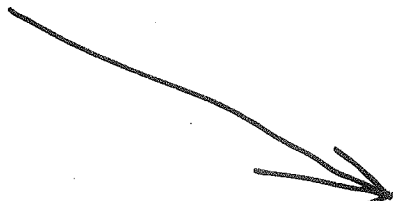
← DISATTACH

RIP

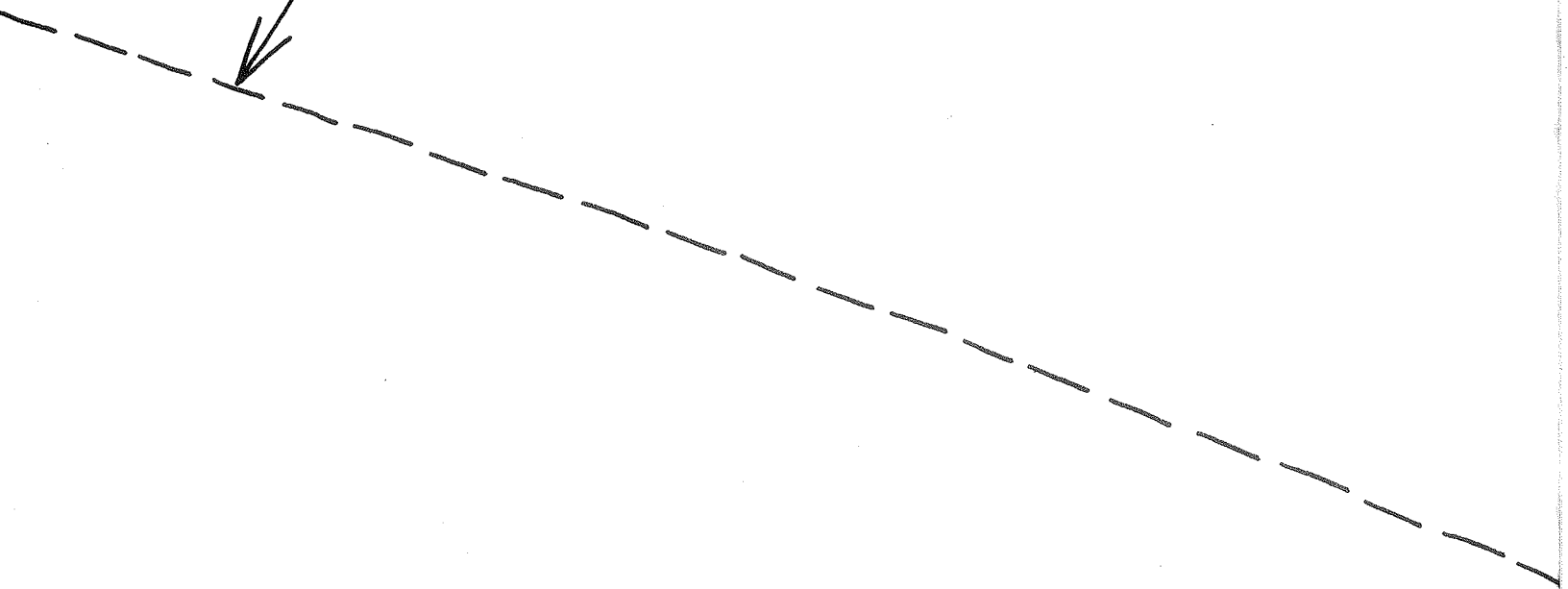
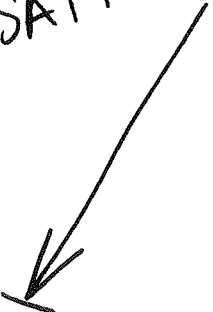


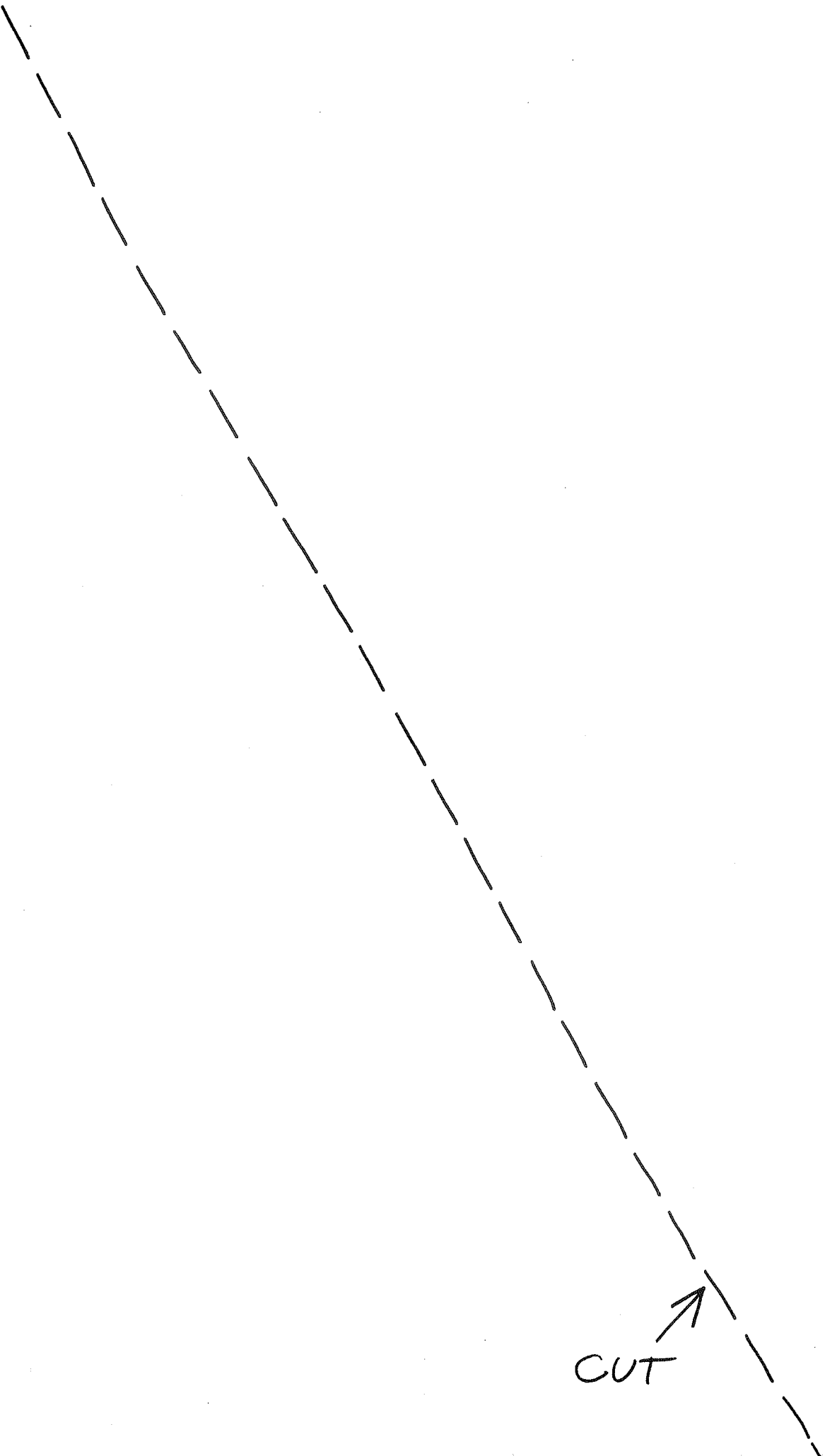


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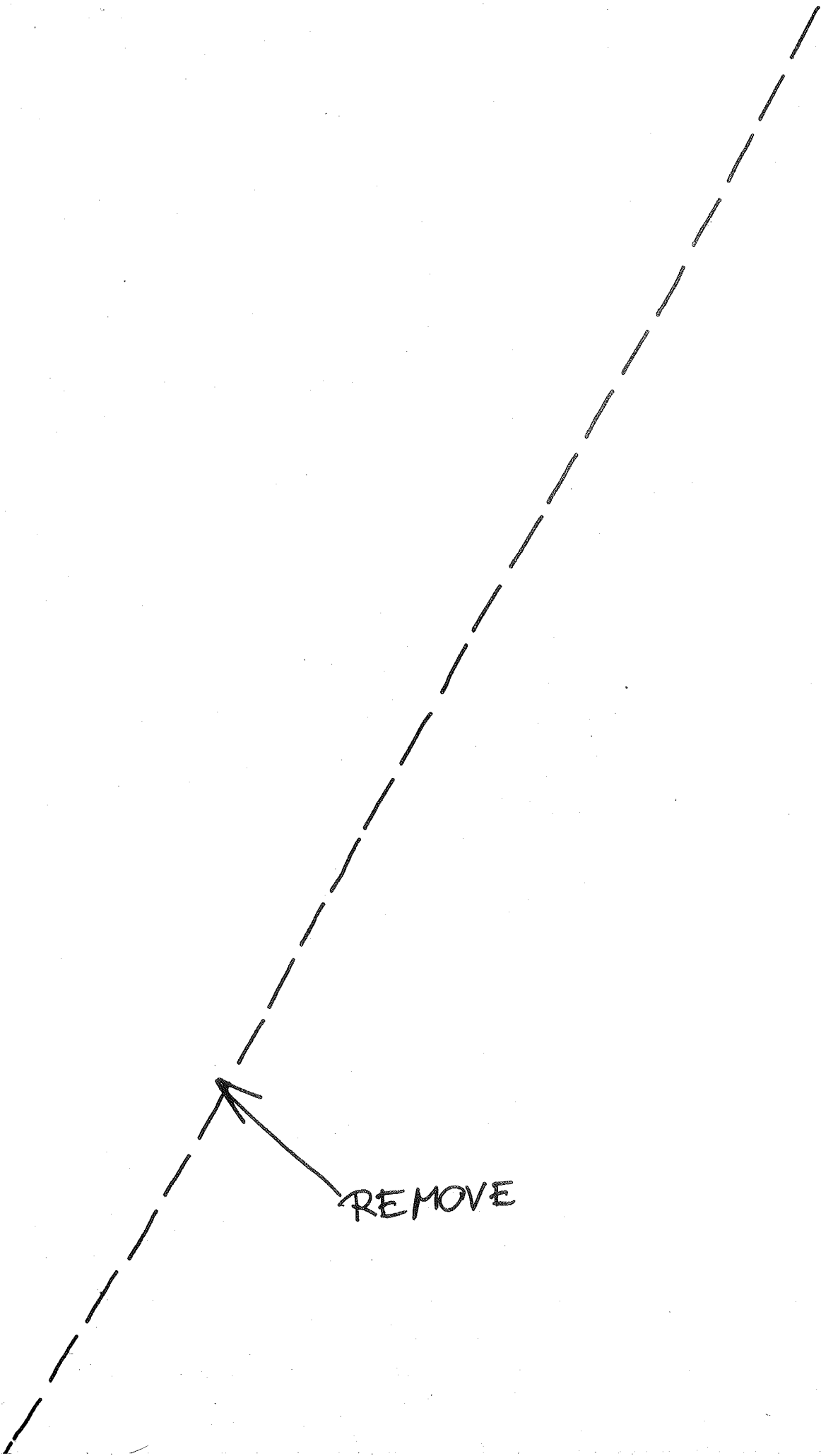


DISATTACH





CUT



REMOVE

DETACH



DISUNITE

Gary Lenhart

Phoning the President

Spring begins on the East River  
depressing me in the tender sidewalk.  
Coatless under Brooklyn sun  
Jeff & I smoke out pretext & go to sea.  
We fold Personal Injury.  
"Sean Connery carries Candice Bergen  
into the desert  
& the President has to send in the Marines."  
He chats with the nation like Once-upon-a-time  
failing to address my Barbary passion.  
Hello, Mr. President,  
I'm just not her candidate.  
She remains unswashbuckled  
as I scamper across the Sahara,  
her uncompromised vote  
beyond my natural resources. I'm New York City  
striding briskly &  
she's a banker obdurate  
behind a 7-foot desk. She's Transheroic  
& I borrowed this camel. Christ, Mr. Jimmy,  
it's hell here in Frontierland.  
I don't want to submerge her in petroleum  
like a Uruguayan patriot, or electro-shock  
her clitoris like they do in South Korea,  
except metaphorically speaking.  
Geography is faces on my planet  
where bourbon rips veins like nuclear explosions,  
eyes drop compendious oceans,  
& lips crack along the San Andreas fault.  
I recognize there are limits to your power.  
Truth is, your atomic Navy won't impress her.  
On her deck she carries hardware  
to awe the insatiable thaw. & into her flood  
I trickle uninspired  
as your aqueous speech  
on 7th Avenue in October.

Lenhart/51

anecdote of the Rag

I hurl the rag onto  
the table top in Memphis.  
The table top's formica  
over a plywood base.

It folds into the wall  
of my Winnebago van.  
Tomorrow I can be in  
New Orleans or Chicago.

"How's your mother," I inquire  
wiping up the chili sauce.  
Beyond your auburn hair  
Memphis's stunned panorama.



## The Education of Henry Adams

We meet on a layover  
in O'Hare Airport;  
you are the jet of my dreams  
blonde from Chicago to Easter.  
In the airport bar young Marines  
long for your bare shoulders  
over beer, but  
you give your vaccination  
to my freaky red beard,  
your biceps so creamy & suburban  
that your boyfriend lifts weights  
& your father is vice-president  
of Continental Can.  
I am vacuum-packed like coffee,  
radically skinny & self-conscious  
of my grammar, climbing  
the ladder to your wing-tips.  
It's Cambodian Spring &  
I'm your proletariat;  
your weight-lifter isn't working out.  
It's lovely chanting Ho Chi Minh with you  
& trashing bank windows. I score 25 points  
in a basketball game,  
you make me that tall. I stride across  
cow pastures like scorning Mayakovsky,  
burn libraries cluttered with incendiary fictions,  
learn to sleep laboriously  
on your avocado silk sheets.  
We schedule LSD babies for our listening pleasure  
& you try to stab me  
after finding me with Rose.  
I had moved out while your father was in town;  
she needed help with her paper on Henry James.

I am John Glenn & you are Cape Canaveral,  
launching me into poetry with your ridicule  
& your legs, never unshaved  
even sitting-in the Chemistry Building.  
Massaging your flushed body with talcum  
I feel like Marc Antony, no longer  
some Adam from a home-town planet  
hanging out in the wake of astrophysics.  
I leave you Moby Dick

& you firebomb the supermarket,  
hoping to lure me back from San Francisco.  
I'm circumambulating Mount Tamalpais.

## Sex

I want to do it different  
in my overstated way  
removing the blue mote that  
flickers  
above the stereo  
like a trick  
of the imagination or the light.  
I mistrust as poetry  
anything that comes to mind  
when I hear the word sustenance.  
Yet the ocean against my window  
imitating rain  
prompts me to thought  
of that anxious old man in his cuff-links.  
He exerts himself with a delicacy  
apocalyptic in this roast beef world  
exciting me, at least, to an austerity  
that slices every word electrically,  
packaging the fibrous connotations  
in a cellophane purchased with metaphorical sweat.  
Burnt! you accuse, celebrating Natural as if it bleeds.  
Rare! I respond, but not so rare as angels  
anymore. A kind of lust, yes,  
merciless & polite.

## Why I Write

I sit in my muscles  
on a satisfied wallet &  
stare at a turntable  
too tired to revolve.  
Up 5 flights  
like a conceptual artist in training,  
down 6  
to the basement of Friday night,  
unconvinced that ecstasy exists  
although I remember Monday  
& the pleasure of her bicycle  
in the kitchen.

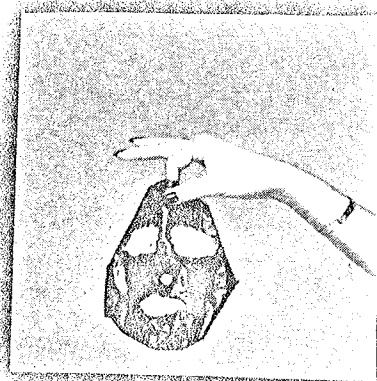
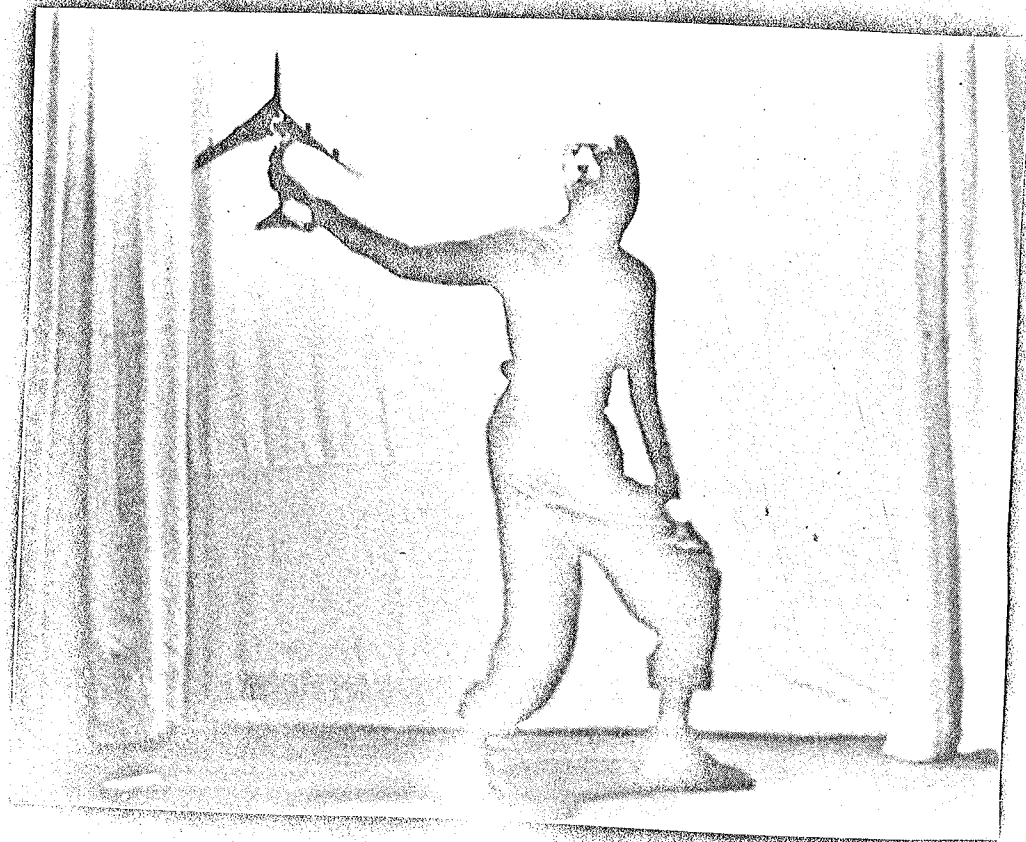
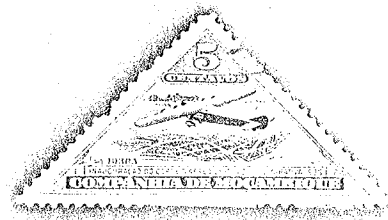
Ah, the reductionism  
of contemporary German cinema,  
where madness is a jukebox of confusion.  
Select E-5 & you're numb in a phonebooth,  
B-7 you vacation in Berlin  
without a passport.  
The silence is frightening  
because you expect to hear guitar &  
here you sit before a movie  
pretentiously black & white.  
You are the banal hero  
of this suds & sausage melodrama,  
a maker of movies searching  
for the UnSelf-Conscious Shot.  
On the cutting-room floor,  
last week's amber passion.  
On the screen  
the train goes nowhere in noonlight,  
the peeled potato on the sink.

## On the Road

Much of today is yesterday  
waiting to get going.  
I'm in a toll booth on an interstate  
highway & nobody  
rolls down their window.  
It's easy to be aloof  
when the Highway Patrol is giving you  
its full support, but  
impossible to hear the passing radios.  
I'm "le douanier" giving music lessons  
with a badge, teaching prodigies  
to smile like Mahler or Chopin.  
My students are infatuated with  
my naive facade. Later I corner them  
on the piano. "Make music, you see,  
visible." I am the genial undertaker  
interpreting love, unctuously  
taking care of business. No  
I don't know what soul means. To speak  
at that instant, however, when  
the first violin awaits a cue &  
refuse to be ingratiating; to get  
the pallbearers in the appropriate limousine,  
such is my potato labor.

### Living

on the fourth floor guarantees nothing.  
Sometimes the door slides open  
with that reassuring  
Swoosh & you're in the bargain basement  
where you've always longed to be.  
Sometimes you're in a tool shed  
on an interstate in Pennsylvania with  
the woman or man of your dreams. I wake  
in a cold cold sweat & there  
on the floor it's visible  
as red worsted knit. I click on the radio  
for the basketball scores &  
it's Artur Rubinstein with the traffic  
report. "Cars backed up on the Deegan Expressway,  
radios blaring Chopin, who, in his  
aristocratic way is indeed charming  
when he controls that hacking. His  
elegant Impromptus, which by their nature  
demand from the listener  
no profound attention, inspire me.



Noel Rico

roberto: a storypoem

roberto once wanted  
to marry the wind  
but the rain wouldn't allow it,  
she claimed he belonged  
to the moisture in the atmosphere,  
pero roberto  
does not belong to anyone,  
roberto would go to all the latin nightclubs  
and after dancing with a woman  
he would tell her  
he was a poet,  
they all gave him a weak smile  
and slid away  
each one he danced with  
each one he wanted to kiss  
touch  
talk to  
slipped through his arms like smoke  
this happened so many times  
that roberto's soul began to crack,  
it developed a permanent tear  
a cut/un tajo, from that moment on  
everything fell  
through him  
landing in his eyes hard shaking  
like the dice in a cupped hand,  
roberto threw snake eyes  
that nearly cut out his,  
this made him feel  
like the champion  
of all the losers  
in the world,  
soon afterwards  
he replaced all the blood

Rico/59

in his body with alcohol,  
his skin turning  
a yellow similar  
to that  
of dirty underwear,  
drunk roberto  
declared war on the world  
and in turn  
the world retaliated  
by not paying any attention to him  
but roberto kept writing poems,  
poems about mofongo spiked with strychnine,  
poems about his great grandmother  
dying of cancer in america,  
poems about spanish speaking  
thunderclaps muffled  
in the eye of the hurricane  
of all the english verbs and adjectives  
that ripped all las palmas  
from la tierra in his father's land,  
poems about  
little jibaritos y jibaritas  
whose spirits collapsed  
from lack of oxygen  
while sitting behind  
a sewing machine or pushing  
a hand truck  
in the garment district,  
poems about their strictly english speaking  
sons and daughters  
suffering from overdoses  
of t.s. eliot, ernest hemingway y ezra pound  
out on long island  
as they trim the roses  
on the lawns of their identical houses  
with their identical cars  
parked in their identical driveways,  
poems about  
new york city policemen  
trying to shoot  
chango  
dead  
with a silver bullet,  
roberto saw so much  
that his poetry  
gave each one  
of his friends  
an eviction notice  
giving them thirty days  
to clear out



of the path  
of the light pouring  
into his eyes,  
there was no room  
in this man's life  
for darkness,  
to roberto  
the peephole,  
the tear  
en la oscuridad  
that he sometimes felt  
would swallow him  
was sacred,  
perhaps one of these days  
you'll bump into roberto  
either on 42nd street or by bethesda fountain,  
what's that?  
what does he look like?  
well other than the yellow skin  
that is a dead giveaway  
roberto looks  
like everybody else around him,  
sometimes roberto  
is roberta,  
because roberto is not one  
but many,  
roberto is one of those severed limbs  
that regenerates  
he is el artista puertorriqueño en nueva york  
he is the puertorican artist in new york  
other than his excessive drinking  
and the fact that not many people  
listen to him  
roberto is a good person,  
it is the atmosphere  
that needs revising  
not him,  
it is the world that he exists in  
that needs all its nails pulled out  
and all its circuits rewired  
in order  
to create  
a different form of movement  
a different dance  
to move to  
not the one  
we have been moving to  
for so long  
what's that?  
what dance?

don't tell me  
you haven't noticed  
the dance  
danced by los puertorriqueños  
who are afraid  
to look down at the floor  
while they're in motion  
for fear  
they will notice  
the blood that stains  
their footsteps  
as they dance  
a mambo nueva york  
has lined with ice  
and cold daggers  
that cut  
the skin open  
just over the heart.

the reason for his rhythm

in a dark corner  
of his apartment  
where a glow hangs  
over the floor roberto  
keeps all of his poems  
and a pistol with only one  
bullet in its chamber  
a bullet for a poet/

una bala para un poeta  
if his voice cannot  
penetrate  
reaching the depth of  
el corazon y los sentimientos  
de su gente to live/write  
solely for the people  
to feel their pain  
to be their poeta/santero  
despojando lo malo  
del cuerpo

de su pueblo this  
is the only alternative to death  
that life offers roberto  
everynight  
everynight he takes the pistol  
in his hands and weighs  
the door of la muerte carefully in his eyes  
will i ever have to use it?  
will i have the nerve?  
self doubts run through his mind  
tripping over the wiring  
of his self confidence

yes  
yes is the answer that fills  
the air around him if  
i fail in my mission i  
will blow my motherfuckin' brains out  
because life will not be worth living  
if i am not the man  
whose destiny i knit  
cada noche con mis ojos over  
my desk writing about  
the world i owe so much to  
that owes me nothing

but its ears

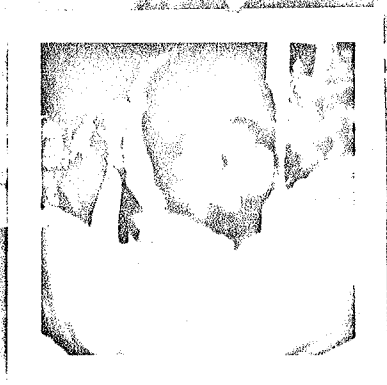
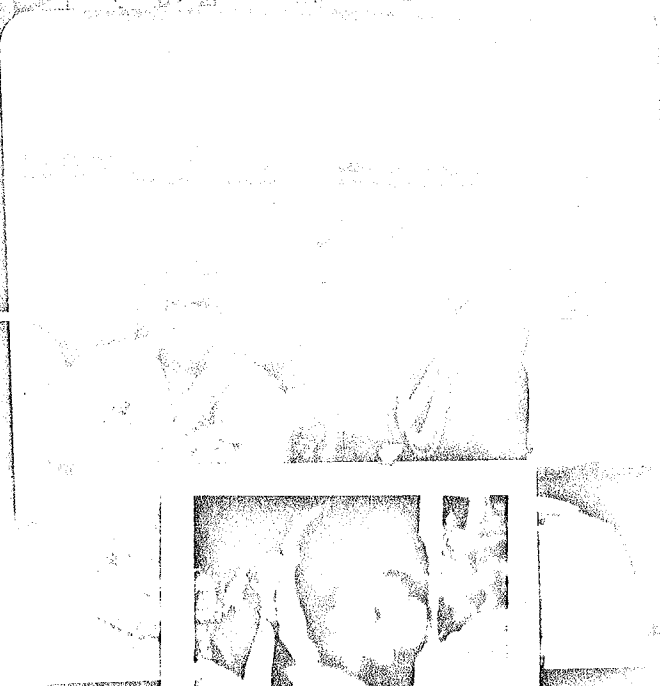
these words fall out of roberto's mouth  
like the praaaaaka tak of the timbalero  
all part of un ritmo that the world  
has no choice but to listen to  
because roberto will not let it dream  
away its existence his poems will fly  
into eyes like daggers thrown cutting through  
the fabric of their sleep hopefully  
even the dead will dance to this guaganco.

roberto dreams

anoche  
roberto soñó  
que changó  
was led blindfolded  
off the roof  
of a building  
                    in the south bronx  
by a plainclothes cop  
posing as yemayá también el soñó  
que los huesos de ernest hemingway  
were dug up  
bleached in the sun  
and grinded down to powder  
as white as cocaine  
which detectives did up  
before they busted  
a group of boleteros  
                                on jackson avenue  
their high enabling them  
to break bones  
in the manner of stoics  
                                meaning  
they did their jobs  
without moving  
a muscle  
                    on their faces  
they kicked  
spit  
and wiped their cordovans  
clean of the blood  
that kept swelling  
on the floor  
with each new cut  
on the flesh  
of the puertorriqueño  
handcuffed to the chair.

a different pose/

having lost the war  
against the elements  
roberto now belongs  
to the moisture in the atmosphere,  
his image travels through el aire  
en un aguacero that falls to the  
pavement becoming part of la calle,  
la gente carry him throughout  
el barrio on their wet soles,  
the water that gushes out of the johnny  
pump carries his rhythms around  
corners over beercans under tires  
to other places where young trigueñas  
pick up his moisture on the points  
of their high heels and sneakers  
that are soaked through to the nylons  
shooting cold chills up their legs  
to their spinal columns sending ripples  
through brassiere straps his presence  
having eaten  
through all surfaces  
travels to the depth  
of the senses at work  
around him.



Gregory Masters

To Frank O'Hara

A.M.

right from work  
    coffee break now  
I've been shouting out all morning  
    with you listening. So far today  
I've been on cliffs with fiddle music  
    and on Madison Avenue eating a hot dog  
    amidst the reds and yellows,  
    Sabrett trucks glistening and  
    with those new buildings  
    Frank, a marvel  
    going straight up together  
    like a fortress  
Manhattan's well protected

You had paintings to look at  
    when you worked  
Who'd you have on your inner office walls?  
I have the cashiers to look at  
Which might be just as good  
    maybe better  
Except  
    the blond one, Ellen  
    doesn't want to fuck me, I think  
And every day is  
    her smile which  
    unfulfilled by me  
    is at least as hard as  
    Pollock's eternities

P.M.

rushing  
    to be in the laundromat  
    before great Frank O'Hara Memorial Reading at 8:30



I have 45 minutes  
with this egg salad sandwich  
which I'm eating too fast  
wish I had a napkin  
and a Schaefer, for a change  
and trying to read "Second Avenue"  
faster than anyone's ever read it before  
while my clothes get clean  
Gary's somewhere in NYC now  
I'll see him at the reading  
as I will  
Michael, Barry (from uptown), maybe  
Gyorgyi (after group therapy) and the other  
St. Mark's faces  
and surprises I'm sure tonight  
I just put my clothes in the dryer  
I have time  
I'll make it  
Kissinger's talking Jewish on the radio  
TODAY'S NEWS: the Utah guy is recovering, his girlfriend's  
still critical, Bronfman cried at the trial  
Yes  
The laundry men really help me  
My move from 12th Street to 15th was  
like the French Revolution  
They give me change, tell me which  
washers and dryers are best  
I've finished reading "Second Avenue" Hail!  
The only time it's ever been read in its entirety  
in a laundromat  
amidst Marv Alpert and the sports  
egg salad and these Chinese men  
giving me change for the machines  
One's drinking a Miller High Life,  
he's an alcoholic  
I didn't understand a thing  
I'm collapsing

11/17/76

To Michael C.

I came over to this topless bar  
the other was getting boring  
Here some guy is wearing sunglasses and  
an all right looking woman bartender  
And I'm wondering  
What kind of poets go to topless bars  
by themselves  
Maybe Toulouse-Lautrec or William Burroughs  
But this is me and it's  
late Monday night (I'm off tomorrow)  
And disco music loud  
is trying to wipe out everything  
The entire history of the universe is right now  
with this \$1.50 Miller High Life  
(when's she gonna dance again)  
Let me paint you this  
This is the infinite  
The topless dancer dances on a  
little rectangular raised stage  
with cheap flashing lights under a  
plexiglass (or some shit) floor  
flashing their colors with a red fabric  
'go get me some red fabric for the stage'  
and there's a step for the girl  
Resting on this, alone  
with a history  
is a shotglass  
I can only be at one place at one time  
I was drinking red wine somewhere else when  
that must have happened  
Someone could be shot in this place  
....I tried to portray a place  
where someone could go mad  
-basically what Van Gogh said  
about his 'Night Cafe'  
green with the pool table and yes  
(this poem is for Van Gogh and you)  
The dancer came over to me after  
two or three other guys and  
we French kissed like the Old West  
She knew I'd been writing poetry and smiled and

Masters/70

talked to me about Allen Ginsberg and  
the 60's in this area and Paul Blackburn, dead  
'yeah, I knew him' she said  
I gave her a dollar but  
didn't touch her like the other guys did  
Maybe I was stupid but I know  
what a woman feels like  
So  
Here's to the French New Wave and  
that struggle to get another  
\$1.50 together for another beer  
I can still taste her tongue

What I Like Most About the Snapshot  
You Sent Me (from Ireland)

First of all, you  
    looking younger than I  
    could have imagined  
Then, I guess  
    Pam's hand on your  
    sister's stomach  
And Pam  
Then  
    the way your scarf is  
    wrapped around your neck  
    or your friend Alan  
    and the way all four of you  
    bunched together  
    take over that  
        clean white  
    airport formica terminal  
    (goodbye Pam)  
Must be a lot of these type  
    of airport goodbye shots  
This is the best  
    (there are no thoughts of goodbye)  
Pam's purple hat  
    (back to the subject)  
Pam's thin eyeglasses  
    which I didn't exactly remember  
Pam's big fur coat  
    and  
Pam's teeth  
Your sister  
    who I think of first as  
    your sister  
    her eyes squinting a little  
    and her hair  
    teased up a little  
    which I don't like on American women  
    (your sister is exotic,  
        it's OK for her)  
Your sister's belt buckle  
Imagining what makes Alan your friend  
His hat and eyeglasses  
    and

Who is taking the shot  
hopefully a stranger  
so no one of the group be left out  
'Sir, would you mind...'

The emptiness of the terminal  
The evidence of scotch tape  
(do you call it that, there?)  
on the photo front  
proving irreversibly that  
this photo has hung on a wall  
somewhere in Ireland

And  
This a finale  
That's about it  
Pam's rings  
The availability of Kodak  
cameras and film over there  
even if the trademarks  
are in French

8/76

Yom Kippur, 1976 (5737)

start with  
this holiest of days and  
I heard the shofar blow  
I ended up with a yarmulke on  
separated from my girlfriend  
by a curtain over 5000 years old  
filled with a Chinatown meal  
directed by a cowboy hero cop on horseback to  
the only synagogue left in Chinatown  
or its humble shadow  
the long earth blast of the shofar  
cleansed me like it was supposed to  
and gave me questions to ask  
my childhood rabbi  
no thoughts of God  
admiring the care and fantasy  
of this temple interior remaining

Love Poem for Michael Scholnick

my legs hurt now cause  
I've been reading your poems  
sitting on the floor  
between the speakers  
rather than in the good chair  
you know,  
right behind the knees

now I'm thinking  
what great pleasure can I give myself  
before going to bed

After two days hanging  
    on right side belt loop  
I put my watch back on my wrist  
That cut, or whatever it was  
    looks healed  
My body walks without me  
    most of the time  
Except when Heather punches  
    me in the stomach  
    hard or  
        gets up  
        real close  
Oh watch! back on  
    my wrist or  
    Bob Dylan on my stereo  
    angelic chorus thru the left speaker  
    believing, yes  
        that  
        'like a river flows'  
For Ted Berrigan