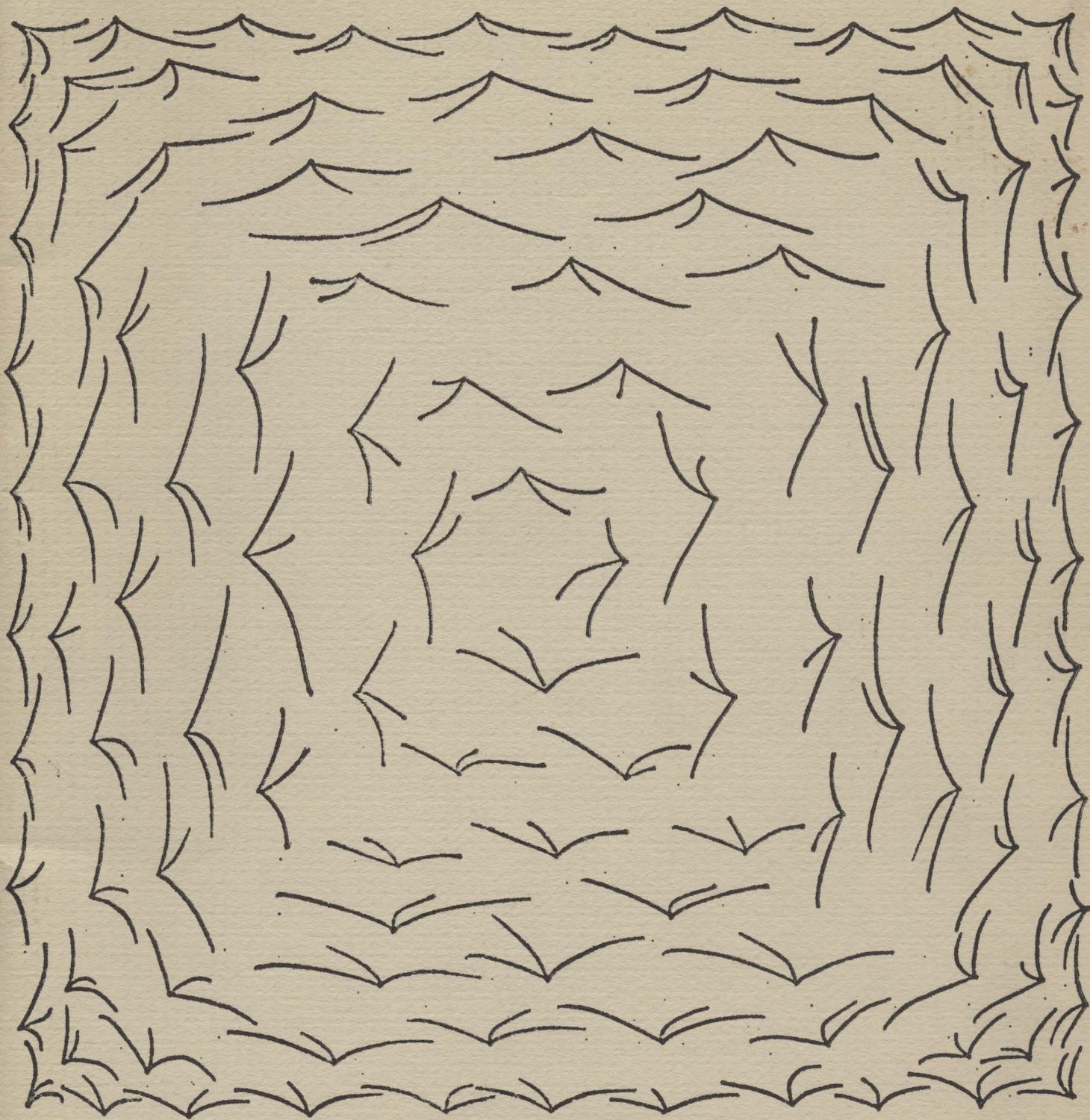


# The New Alfred Review

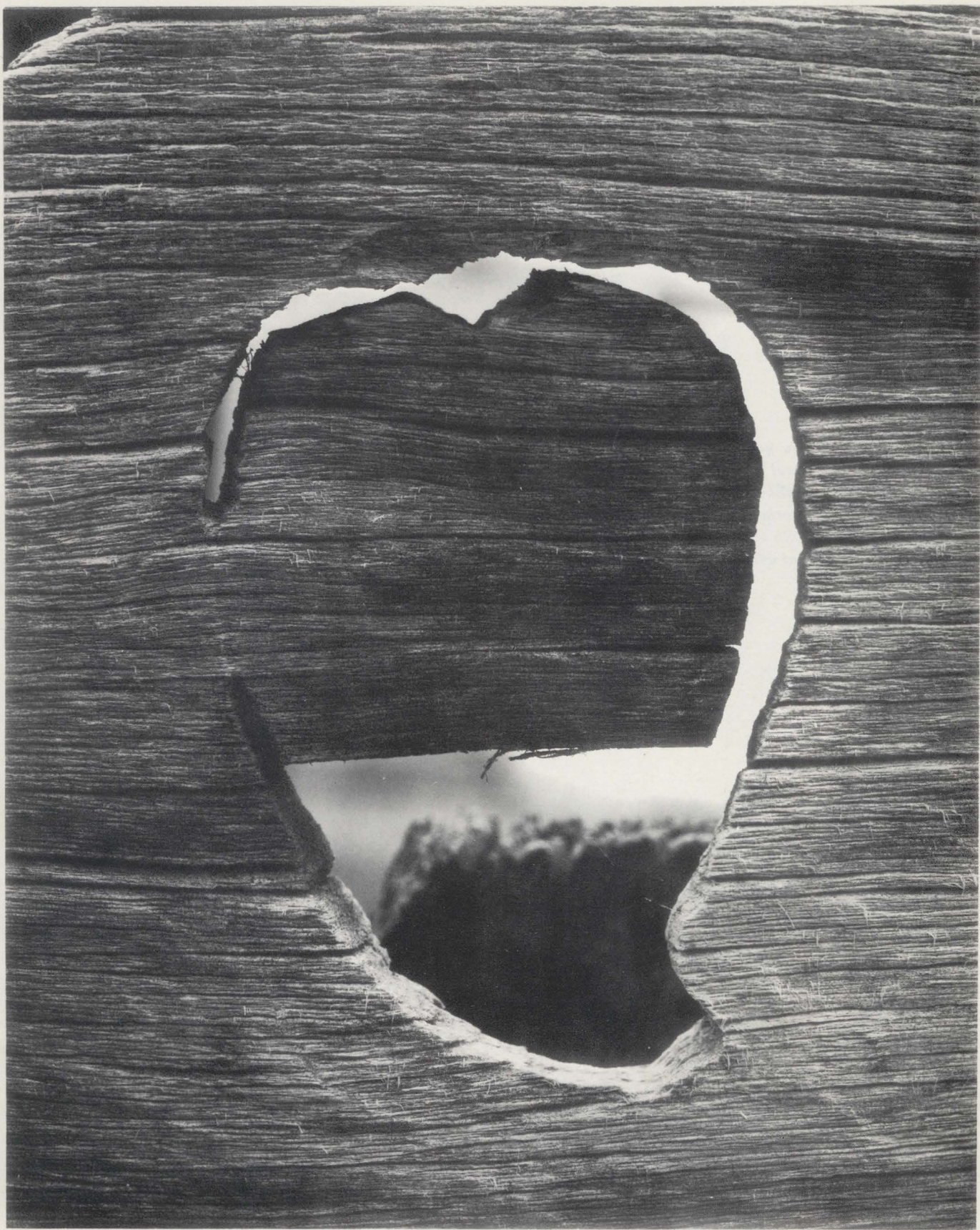
ISSUE TWO











*John Wood*



*"So, Tonsor," says Jones, "I find you have more trades than one; how came you not to inform me of this last night?" "A surgeon," answered Benjamin with great gravity, "is a profession, not a trade. The reason why I did not acquaint you last night that I professed this art was that I then concluded you was under the hands of another gentleman, and I never love to interfere with my brethren in their business. ARS OMNIBUS COMMUNIS; but now, sir, if you please, I will inspect your head, and when I see into your skull, I will give my opinion of your case."*

Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*



## Winter 1976 - 1977

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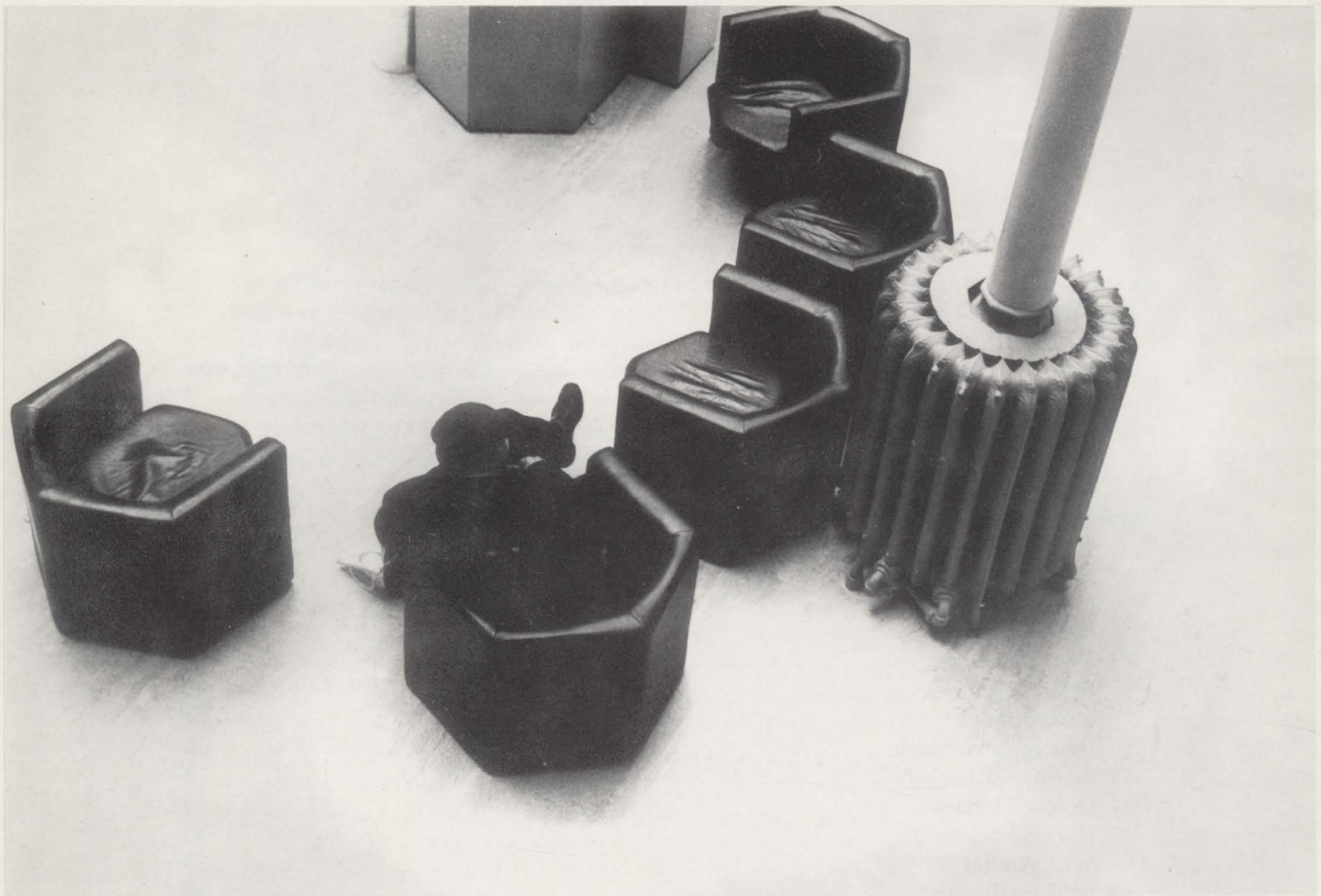
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All inquiries and submissions should be mailed to *The New Alfred Review*, Box 1152, Alfred, New York 14802. Please include self-addressed stamped envelope.





*Paul Stephenson: Five Photographs*









*Paul Stephenson: Five Photographs*











## **Freeport For The First Time**

Late August  
the rainy season—  
heavy air spreads  
below  
the pulsing sun.

Predator hawks  
span the sky  
watching for victims;  
pigeons rustle on  
the air conditioning.

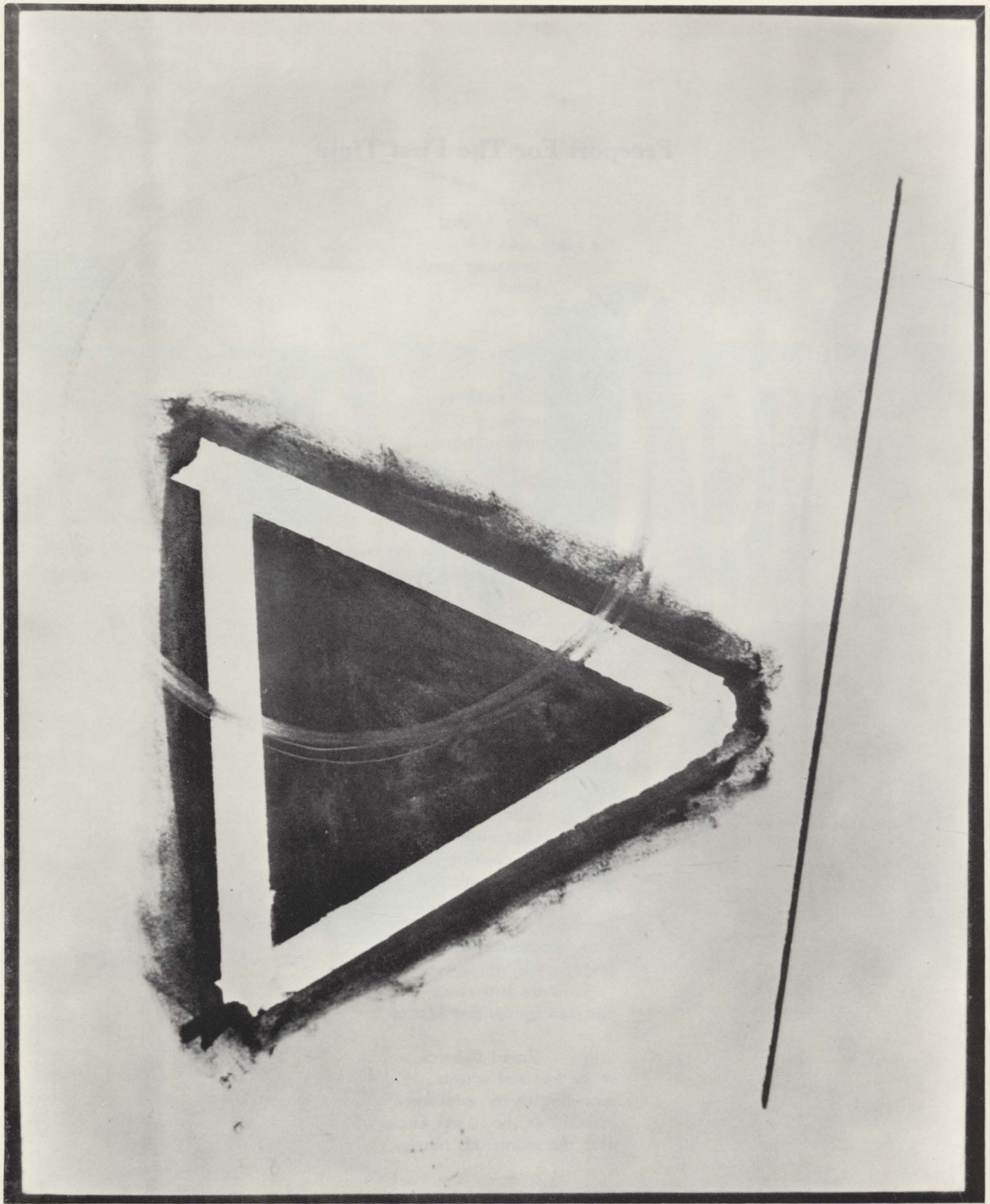
Small boys in red ball caps  
hustle tourists' quarters  
in the markets  
where Bahamians sit in the cool  
drinking German and American beer.

Open a space—  
mile on mile of beach,  
waves pushing back at  
the white hotels  
which cast shadows over  
the faces of people.

Underfoot,  
hot limestone is everywhere;  
palm and pine  
offer little shade  
for opening packages  
of cigarettes and alcohol.

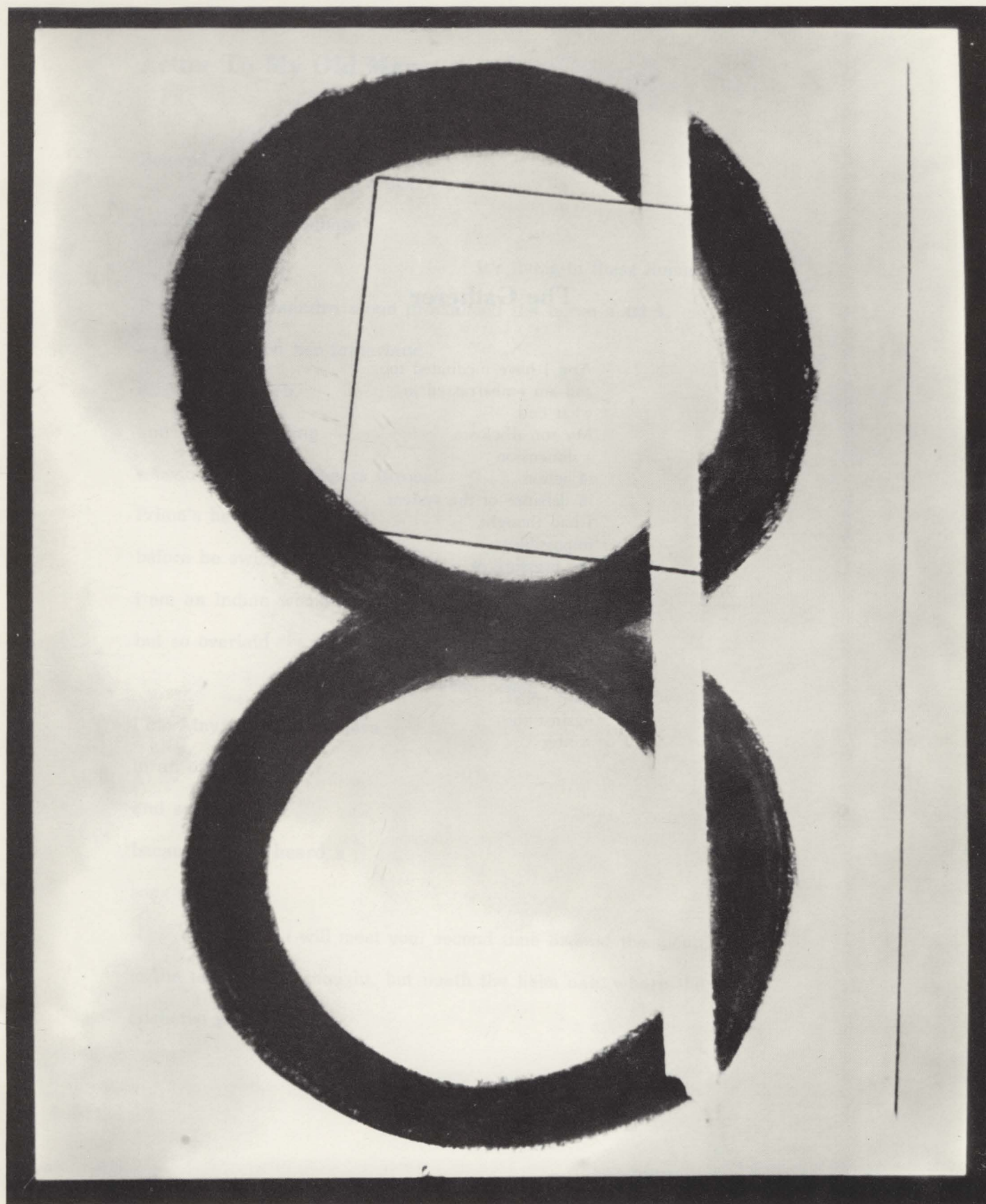
Jewels on her fingers,  
white arm extended,  
Daddy's lady throws  
for thousands—  
flies and mosquitoes scatter.

Grand Bahama,  
below feet and wheels,  
sprawling in its seduction  
as the hawks circle  
near the monstrous hotels.



*Kim Goertner*





**The Gatherer**

And I have meditated too  
and am embarrassed to  
what end.  
My son discloses  
a dimension  
of action  
in defiance of the system  
I had thought  
impossible:  
the pressing of  
apples  
the gathering of  
nuts  
the hulls, these too,  
for sculpture,  
with epoxi,  
against the  
winter



## Letter To My Old Man

Beloved,  
did you wince when  
i called you my cabbage?

It's living in these Roman days  
Properius, "Cassandra alone proclaimed the horse a trick,  
as it crept upon her fatherland"  
serpere, the verb,  
and Pyrrhus, coiling  
second generation fingers through  
Priam's hair

before he swings his sword dear,  
i am an Indian woman  
but so overlaid

have even posed as Melville's  
little May queen cassandra  
in an orange blanket  
and seldom smile  
because i once heard a  
song of

well, i will meet you, second time around the moon, not  
in the tansy as i'd thought, but neath the holm oak, where the  
mistletoe grows.

## **dredging the Pee Dee River**

Before the settling  
of high waters,  
muck must be dragged  
up from relaxed banks  
to keep the aging vermillion  
clay from slipping into swampland.  
This I know not from years  
of watching the swelling  
waters of the rainy season  
but from a moment's view  
of an old rusted river dredge  
and the beads of sweat  
on the face of the negro operator  
toiling in the long drooping heat  
of his airless perch.

**Steven Dolmatz**





Thanks To You . . . . . There's Garbage

Charlie Keane



## **A Different River**

He had been born in the midwest in a town that was once a river port. At the time of his childhood the water was brown and sluggish; the few barges that travelled it went straight through to Kansas City. The new homes were built far from its course because it gave off a foul odor at certain times of the year. His family lived in the old neighborhood. The smell of the water was endured, nobody mentioned it particularly, it was one of those things that existed. It was a quiet town. The older houses were flanked by lawns and canopied by the same trees the first settlers had planted. They had porches, some of them with the sloping roofs more characteristic of the South. Those houses were the most admired. They attested to an elegance and abundance that was a part of the past. His house was one of those. It had wooden inlaid ceilings and parquet floors and outside on the porch, hand-carved pillars. The porch was the center. In the evenings the adults sat on the swing sipping their drinks and talking, some of them smoking. He would play on the lawn amongst the fireflies and locusts, aware that in the darkness those on the porch watched him. Their voices carried and sometimes they talked about him:

“I went to the store today to buy Jerry some overalls.”

“Oh, did you go to Lerner’s?”

“That child! It’s so hard to keep him in clothes.” Or else they talked about cars or tv shows. They didn’t care much what they said and they only half listened. They just wanted to add their voices to the night sounds, to say to them, “we are here too.” Or so he imagined. But implicit in the porch talk was the idea that evening was not for great things. Those had been accomplished already. If not during the day then in some past time and if not in the past of their memory it was in the time of their ancestors, when the river was clean.

What he saw when he was young, standing only half the height of the others, still persisted. When he stood on the lawn and looked up at them his eyes rested on their feet. Sometimes he saw as many as ten, his mother’s in slippers and the others in walking shoes, all of their ankles crossed and their feet propped up at an angle. They sat that way for hours. He envied them their leisure. Out on the lawn there were so many dramas, he wondered that they didn’t heed them; then he realized that they were resting for a reason. Something was in the offing, a calamitous event. They had known them in the past and they were resting now, waiting for the next to come. That impression settled his mind. He played on the lawn a little anxiously from that time on knowing that when the event approached he would be the first to meet it. Small as he was, his forehead creased and he pursued his games with a fever.

When he grew to their height the war appeared. It swooped down on them with the majesty of a great white bird. No one questioned it. It seemed to have been anticipated and even called for. The evening talk gained in volume and there was a stirring of feet. He felt he had at last discovered a purpose. It seemed natural for him to enlist. When he kissed his mother goodbye she had tears in her eyes but he knew that if given the chance she wouldn’t extend her arm to stop him.

The war suited him. In that sunless, rainy country when he saw and heard the guns he wasn’t as disillusioned as the others. It made sense to him that one place should be overrun by soldiers. They would return, after a time, to their homes on the other side of the globe and rest and forget, and they would feel, underneath, that they had been well used. He stayed longer than many and he grew to know the country. It was different. The rivers were alive and every square of the land was planted on. When the people came home from the fields in the evening there wasn’t time for any talk. If they had extra moments they sat alone and prayed. Their houses were very simple. The women were different. He admired their type, the smooth olive skin and the depthless eyes. They were narrow, hardly built as bearers of children, but in them, as in other things, the minimal served well. He knew instinctively that he would find one to bring home as his wife. He imagined sitting on the porch with his parents and his bride, his mother asking his wife how she put up her hair, it was so beautifully done, and admiring her as though she were a strange and elegant ornament and his bride perplexed by the lawn on which nothing was grown, and the trees that were planted for shade, not fruit, and the sound of the locusts and the creaking of the porch swing. His mother would tell her when the house had been built and how many generations had sat there and they would sip their drinks and afterwards talk lazily of nothing in particular. He would return to his parents porch every evening and prop his feet on the railing and watch a lithe olive skinned child play on the grass.

He called her Linda because he was unable to pronounce the name her parents had given her. She spoke some English—she had been close to the soldiers for only a short while but she learned quickly. Each night before they went to sleep he taught her new words. She would repeat them in the rhythms of her language. He made her name the parts of her body and when she would come to, “and this is my breast,” and lay her hand over the brown nipple, he couldn’t imagine a greater bliss. She slept with her head on his chest and often during the night he would wake up and feel the unfamiliar coarseness of her hair against his arm and he would touch her skin wondering at its softness. He loved the way she moved, the way she



bent her wrist or curved her arm.

The city where he was stationed had grown unpleasant. Because the bombings had created a shortage of housing they lived in a tiny room. He had submitted a request for his departure and the papers for Linda's entry into America were on their way. He still went to the post each morning; it was a long walk picking through the rubble and the sleeping bodies but he had begun to close his senses knowing that soon he would be home. He could feel a drowsiness take over. His father had written, he had found a job for him and on the next block one of the older houses was up for sale, it had a nice porch and a big lawn... From where he stood he could see the few buildings that still rose up against the horizon. The others had been levelled and the white dust from their broken walls covered the grounds. There was nothing but whiteness and here and there a few ghost-like figures bent among the rubble scavenging for valuables. One seemed like Linda. He was about to go and ask her what she was doing when the woman turned toward him, her hand cradling a necklace, and he saw that the face was wider and not as gentle.

"Things will be O.K. now," she said in a pained whisper, pointing to the glimmering jewels.

"Yes, I think they will be," he replied.

She laughed sardonically but he hardly heard her as he turned away and walked toward the post.

In the evenings when he opened the door to their room he was always struck by a sense of timelessness, as though nothing had happened from the moment he had shut it that morning. Linda had a key of her own and could go out if she wished, but in the way she came towards him, hardly lifting her feet, her arms hanging at her sides, he knew that she stayed indoors. He wanted to take her home soon and lay her down in the short midwestern grass to heal.

Her face was swollen and her eyes seemed deeper, had she been crying? He pulled her into his arms. She felt wooden. He kissed her face, kissed off the salt till she forced a smile, and then he said cheerfully in a soldier's voice, "That's my girl!" and patted her rear as she went into the kitchen.

In bed that night he turned to look at her. The simple lines of her features, the dark shallow eyes, the curve of her brow: he loved her so. He ran his hand over her hair and it felt as coarse and thick as grass, and he asked her, "Where is your breast?"

She parted her nightgown. "This is my breast," she said, the curious rhythm of her language making the words more delicious. As her olive fingers felt for the nipple her eyes suddenly teared and she turned away from him and huddled against the wall.

He felt hurt. He wanted to touch her but he couldn't lift his arm, the space between them forbade it. He lay on his back and watched the flies converge around the light bulb.

The flies were thick by the river. When he was young his mother washed him directly after he came home from playing there. He was glad to sit in the tub of hot, soapy water. It was a warmer, more secure world, a nice contrast to the river, which always, from the perspective of the tub, seemed fearful. But he never stopped going. The river had an appeal—the fish on the banks, the rusted metal anchored in the mud at rakish angles, and the water itself, thick with oil, hardly water anymore...

...It was death. They hadn't spoken of her losses. When they talked of leaving he asked if there were people she needed to say goodbye to. She shook her head sadly, no. He wondered then what she had suffered.

The flies on the ceiling moved in an ever-evolving form. Of course he would never know. He turned towards her. She lay facing him now and he looked at her, past her skin, past her eyes, into the stench of the river, and past that into darkness...and then he shyly lowered his gaze.

He thought of the times he had made love to her recklessly and he felt ashamed.

As though to say, "I'm sorry, I understand now," he leaned over her, lifted the hair from her neck and kissed the hot skin underneath. He pitied her. He pitied the little tufts of hair, the skin, the bone. She had suffered so much and the back of her neck where heat and darkness were trapped seemed particularly sad. He wanted to wrap her into his arms, this precious doll fallen into his hands miraculously, he wanted to rock her in his arms till her suffering vanished. He wanted to hold her head against his chest and kiss the back of her neck over and over. Its sadness made it so delectable. As he bent to kiss it he felt her fist come down hard on his shoulder. It shocked him; he had never encountered her anger before. Her teeth glistened. She straddled him, pressing her knees into his side and viciously pommelling his chest with her fists. He felt limpid, unable to move. Where her bare thighs gripped him his skin turned a blotchy red. He felt betrayed.

She stopped as quickly as she had begun, dismounted him gracefully, and walked to the window. For a moment she stood looking out into the night and then she turned to face him. Though she knew he couldn't understand her language she began to speak, slowly at first, as though to force the meaning on him, and then more excitedly, gesturing with her hands. He knew she wanted him to understand but he couldn't. His pride wouldn't let him. He looked at her as he might look at a stranger. The night seemed to dissolve the window behind her and lift her up into space till she stood far from the foot of the bed. Far beyond him. Her face grew indistinct. He was no longer aware of her loveliness. He remained inattentive, leisurely examining the notion that theirs was probably the only lit window for miles. That here above the rubble, in the only building that still broke through the horizon, in a tiny room where night pushed against the walls, a small human drama was taking place. A drama between a



woman and a man, two people surrounded by night. He looked at her. He thought of the bare thigh that had gripped his waist and pushed its muscle into him. She was strong. Too strong to rock in his arms like a child.

As though sensing his change of mind she began to speak again, repeating several words over and over. Couldn't she try to say it in English; why did she even attempt to use her language with him?

The sheets were rough. The bulb glared. When he shifted his gaze from it to the figure who stood before him he saw dots of light instead of a woman. He wanted to go

back to his original vision of her. This other one confused him.

She came over to the side of the bed, blocking the glare from the bulb. Her face had a certain softness. She extended her arm. He saw how the light behind her fringed it and as it floated toward him it seemed detached, not a part of her, just an arm. He wondered if he might grasp it, confused as he was, because it was simply an arm; and with night beyond them and the wreckage of a city below them, there was something essential in it, something he wanted to have.

## The Ocean

My mother tells me that when I was young I would sit in front of the living room window for hours staring out at the brown field that stretched behind the house. Or maybe it was just the sky I looked at. She couldn't tell. Sometimes she would catch me sitting there at night. We lived in a desolate stretch of country where there weren't any lights for miles. What did I see out there?

I of course don't remember. Even now whenever I pass a window I stop for a moment and sometimes when I look out I blur my vision slightly so that everything I see is suspended into unreality. It's a strange sensation. Delineations are obscured; shape, distance, color, but what is most magnificent and comforting is that the distinction between myself and what exists beyond the window blurs away as well.

At one time I had a great need for devotion. Religion didn't satisfy it because it seemed too banal and American. Friends or lovers; at the time that I speak of I was eighteen and possessed of a peculiar asceticism that made such imperfect connections seem traitorous. My devotion was extended to things beyond myself, the ocean, the sky, the forest, for instance, but in particular for me at that age it was the ocean.

Shortly after high school graduation I left my parents and moved to Atlantic City. The city was hot and crowded but I found a room close enough to the beach so that I could smell the water and hear the surf at night when the traffic died down.

Once I was settled I found a job in the local supermarket. Each day I stamped at least forty cartons of cans and I discovered as time went on, that I wasn't at all unhappy doing it. A Slavic woman named Marta worked at one of the registers. We took our lunch together and talked on the job whenever we got the chance. She was an older woman, in her late thirties I would guess. She had the wide flat face typical of Slavs, plump arms and finely articulated masculine hands.

We were the only two on the eleven thirty lunch shift. She was always at the table first and when I entered I'd see her sitting with a cup of coffee and a piece of pastry before her. On the first day of work she offered me a pastry but when I saw the exquisitely patterned and twisted form I told her I couldn't possibly eat anything so beautiful. Though she tried to dissuade me I still refused.

Finally she said, "If that is what you think, that you cannot have what is beautiful, then I am sorry because you will miss many things, many things. So go ahead, change your mind and eat it."

After that it became a custom. Each day she brought a pastry and each day when I ate it she would say, "See, you change your mind, yes?"

I was often surprised at how clearly she understood my nature. After stamping the cans it was my habit to arrange them on the shelves in neat rows. One time when Marta was standing by me she began to laugh.

"William," she cried out, "how you amuse me. You



don't take into account the people! They'll come by here and in a second they'll destroy this...this order you've created."

After several months of living by myself I had become so ensconced in my singularity that Marta was the only person I spoke with. In time I discovered that her voice had become a part of me; the thick accent and the peculiar grammar echoed in my ear when I was alone. Walking to and from work along the beach I would hear her say as I stepped over the shells, "Oh look at that one, William," and when I picked one up her voice quoted my thoughts as I examined it. "The purple, see how the purple bleeds onto the white; touch it, it's as smooth as the sea itself."

Winter settled down on us quite suddenly. The ocean turned grey and when I stood on the beach the wind pulled at me as though I were another piece of jetsam. One January day was particularly cold and I was walking along aimlessly kicking at the sand when I realized that the malaise I felt swelling in my chest was from disappointment. I had walked along the shoreline each day for eight months. There had been changes and I had been a lot. But through it all the ocean had never responded. It was still a thing totally removed from myself. Even when I stood so the line of hotels was blocked from my view and all I saw was the sky, the horizon and the water, all of that majestic space before me; I felt small and dull and cramped. Maybe I didn't stand in one spot long enough. Maybe a vigil was required. It was so cold that day and what I wanted most was to sit in a diner over a cup of coffee. I was about to give up when I had a peculiar thought. It was one of those that hits so hard and true the weaker forces of the self haven't a chance to argue. I took off my jacket and laid it down on the sand, my pants on top of it, my sweater, my shirt, my socks, and then I anchored the bundle down with my boots. Barefoot, in my shorts and undershirt I waded into the surf.

It was spring. Marta told me over the clatter of the register one day that she had wanted to live at the seashore ever since her childhood. Hers was a land-locked country; she said you were born with a reverence for the ocean because it was something you would probably never in your life be able to see. Now that she was close to it she rarely got down to the beach. Standing at work all day made her too tired. I suggested then that we meet one Sunday for lunch and walk along the boardwalk. Her excitement at the proposal made me feel gallant and I decided that I would treat her to lunch.

We had arranged to meet by the entrance to the movie house. I was a bit behind time but I couldn't force myself to run; it was too pleasant and the walkway was crowded. I felt a little nervous. On passing a florist I contemplated flowers but decided against it, they would make the occasion too formal. From a long way off I saw her standing against the billboards, she was wearing a tight red sweater and a black skirt. I felt ashamed for her. In her

ordinary clothes she looked a little vulgar.

"I was so afraid you had forgot," she said as I approached.

"Marta, I wouldn't forget."

She smiled. "Come on, where shall we eat?"

I told her that I had made reservations at the restaurant in the Lido Hotel, that it would be my treat and she should order whatever she wanted.

"I'm not dressed well," she said. "You should have told me."

I assured her she looked fine. As we walked to the restaurant she did most of the talking:

"What a beautiful day.

Look how blue the sea...

You know what I like best, the sound of shoes on the boardwalk.

Everyone looks so happy, no?

Look at that baby...

You look different outside of the supermarket. I'm used to knowing you in the uniform. And me? Do I seem changed?"

The sun was bright. Everyone we passed wore loud, garrish colors. Some carried transistors and above the sound of the surf and the clatter of feet there was the blare of radio announcers following the moves of a game. The ocean was on our right and it was as blue as a postcard and as distant and unreal. Something that we would never really see.

I told her she looked about the same but the truth was I liked her better in the pink uniform she wore at work.

As soon as we entered the restaurant I realized I had made a mistake. At eighteen my age often got the best of me and silly things, like trying to impress an acquaintance, would overrule my sensitivity. The place was too plush. People stared at her as we were led to our seats. She found the number of spoons and forks confusing and her hands shook as she unfolded her napkin. We hardly spoke. I felt embarrassed for both of us and couldn't wait to get her out onto the boardwalk again. It was a long, tedious meal but when it was finally over she dabbed her mouth carefully with the white linen napkin leaving a pale red imprint of her lips.

Once outside we walked along silently, feeling the wind, the sun, watching the people. When she grew tired we sat down on a bench overlooking the sea.

"William, sit close, the wind makes me chilly." She pulled me next to her till our legs were touching.

"That's better, I should have worn a jacket. You're not chilly?"

I shook my head. The proximity made me uneasy.

"You know William, though you are so much different and so much young, I like you, you are the only person I call my friend."

"Thank you," I mumbled. I could smell her lipstick. She looked at me. I wanted to tell her that for me too she was my only friend, but I couldn't.



"Sometimes I am so lonely," she moaned. She stretched her plump legs out before her, unashamed of the veins that crisscrossed them.

I suddenly felt revolted. The straps of her black brassiere peeked through her sweater. It had bothered me through lunch and now, in front of the sea, it seemed even more troubling.

"I am having such a good time today," she said, "though at lunch, do you know, I was afraid, it was so rich, I hope you don't mind."

"No, not at all. Do you like salt water taffy?"

"Oh, yes."

"Come on, I'll buy you a box."

"Oh William, you're a sweetheart." She kissed me on the cheek exuberantly and then exclaimed in dismay, "oh dear, I've left a mark. I'm so sorry." She took out her handkerchief, moistened a corner with her tongue and holding my chin in her hand rubbed the spot off my cheek.

"Pink."

I handed her the beribboned box of pink taffy. She tore off the cellophane and to my amazement offered the candy to people who passed us on the boardwalk. Only an old man accepted. He bent over the box eagerly. They were all the same but to him the one in the center had a certain distinction. His fingers, as he tried to grasp it, fumbled mercilessly and he muttered, "you're so kind," over and over as though his voice would turn our attention away from his predicament. Marta finally picked the candy out for him and he beamed like a child when she dropped it into his opened palm. I steered her away quickly. She would have unwrapped it for him if he had indicated that desire as well.

"Marta," I pleaded, "save them for yourself. I bought them for you."

"All right, but you have to take some." She held the box out coaxingly, "go ahead, put a handful in your pocket."

"I really don't like taffy."

"Oh William, we should have got something that you liked too."

"Candy doesn't agree with me. Well, shall we head back, you must be getting tired."

"Oh yes, I've had a wonderful day."

We left the noise and glitter of the boardwalk, walked along quiet neighborhood streets when three houses before her own she took my hand between hers and said, "You must come see my house and have a little Russian tea."

I consented. The sea air had made me chilly and I knew she would have been offended if I'd refused. We walked up a flight of stairs and she unlocked the door at the top. The room that lay beyond it seemed at first to be a maze of pictures. She sat me down at a table and disappeared through another door. I looked around. The

walls were a collage of greeting cards, pictures of saints, photographs, letters, bits of ribbon and wrapping paper. The room had an airless smell. There was a rocking chair in the center with a stack of magazines beside it and it occurred to me that she probably had nothing to do on the weekend but sit in the chair and read.

She reappeared. "Do you like it? It's not much, I know. These are my friends," she said, pointing to the walls. "They keep me company. They're my memory. I save everything, you see, then I'm always reminded of what I've done. I'll flatten out the taffy box and hang it up and it will be there for me always to remember this wonderful, wonderful day."

"You look at me funny, William. Maybe it seems sad to you that I should do that?"

I was shocked that she could decipher my look so clearly. "It does seem sad."

She placed her plump arms on the table and folded her hands before her. Then she unclasped them and touched her forehead, her cheek; the finger moved down to the corner of her lip, stayed there a moment, and then gave the face up entirely and the hand returned to its mate on the table.

"You see," she began, "you have to carry with you other people's faces. Your own isn't enough. When I first came to this country I remembered what my friends and my family back home looked like. They comforted me. But after awhile the distance and time between us pushed in and I lost them. I couldn't remember anymore. It made me afraid. I hadn't met anyone here who I could care for so I still needed them. That was when I took out my box of pictures. My saints had been up on the wall and I thought it wouldn't hurt to put my family and friends up next to them. Now I also put cards and letters up. See that one over there? That was from our boss at Christmas. I liked it that he thought of me. Did he give you a card too?"

"Yes."

"I bet you threw it away."

"Yes."

"Well, I am different. I needed that card very badly so I saved it."

"Marta, why did you leave your country?"

"I was foolish. I thought things would be better here."

"And are they?"

"I have a job that pays good money." She shrugged her shoulders. "But you know, there are things I miss. I would have my own family by now if I had stayed there." She got up from the chair with a tired motion, "and that to me is more important. But things are never how you want them, yes? And now, let me make some tea to warm us."

She walked into the kitchen area and lit a burner under a kettle on the stove. Her movements had a tone of resignation. She opened a cupboard and took down a small cardboard box, opened a drawer, took out a spoon and put



five teaspoons of tea into a golden teapot. The routine and dreary actions of a life. It shouldn't have to be that way. In a flurry of small innocent rage the words were pronounced before I had a chance to think of caution. I said, "Marta, don't give up."

Rather than asking, "What do you mean?" and making the original question stale and embarrassing she took the clue of haste.

"I haven't. You, William, you're at an age where everything seems sad. You have high...wants, ideas. No one, and not yourself can match them. I remember how it is. That is how I left my country to come here. But there is not the meeting of expectations. Do you understand? Not ever is there. And you must not think of them. You must do things, fill the life up..."

The kettle on the stove whistled and she poured the steaming water into the teapot.

"Now it must sit awhile before it's ready."

She carried the teapot and two cups over to the table and sat down opposite me.

"I will pour when it's ready."

"But you have to have expectations," I said eagerly, "you have to know what you want otherwise you would never do anything."

"Just little things, William, one little thing at a time, like feeling cold you make some tea, yes? You don't stay out in the cold."

"No, sometimes you do stay out in the cold. Sometimes you have to. Sometimes you do more than just stay there; you make yourself colder, like going swimming in a winter ocean. I've done it. It's a good thing to do. I felt invigorated afterwards."

"And what were you hoping for when you did that?"

I blushed. "Well, it's hard to explain. I had an idea, and I guess I still have it, that the ocean is, or that it has a certain power..."

"Which you wanted, yes?"

I nodded, feeling like a naughty boy finally brought to the attention of his mother. But instead of receiving the beating I expected her face opened to a smile.

"I remember. I know so well what you mean because I was like that. There is something...to praise in a person who wants the ocean, the sky, all of the big things, to give to him. Something to praise in a person who expects to find a, how can I say it, a..."

"A connection," I whispered.

"Yes, that's right, a connection. But there is also something..."

There was a pause and I felt her stroke my arm.

"...laughable."

The word rushed through the air like a falling piece of china. To break the tension she began to pour the tea. Shocked and feeling terribly dislocated I watched as though the tilt of the pot and the thin stream of tea were the first perceptions in a finite world.

## Greying

Lillian stood in front of the mirror and lifted her bangs. She had discovered her first grey hairs only a few days ago. They shocked her. In the last month she had noticed other signs of age: wrinkles on her hands, protruding veins, and an occasional pain in the small of her back, but none of these were so blatant as the few grey hairs she looked at now. She felt a sense of panic. something she had never before felt in relation to her body.

"If it upsets you then why don't you dye it?" Jerrold

lay in bed propped up by a pillow, reading. She wondered if he was right. It was a simple decision.

"Many women dye their hair."

"I know that," she snapped.

"Alright then. I was just trying to help."

She sat on the bed beside him and felt the panic rising. "Jerrold!"

"What, Lil..."

She looked at him with tears in her eyes. "I don't know



what's come over me..."She hadn't cried in a long while. Her mouth twisted uncontrollably and the tears rushed out. Jerrold rocked her in his arms.

"I don't know why I feel this way. It just came on me all of a sudden...this feeling..."

"What feeling?"

"...this feeling about death." In the protection of his arms she succumbed. Her body jerked like a small child's and she cried with relief knowing she could take it to its end. Jerrold stroked her back and murmured soothing things that he knew weren't true; "You don't have to die." "You'll live as long as you want to." "I'll be with you forever." Their falseness struck her painfully and each time her sobs increased.

At last she leaned back on his chest wearily and said, "It's funny. I had always thought that when you grew to be my age you accepted inevitable things because you were somehow instructed by nature. That's why I felt so panicky. I realized that I hadn't been taught anything at all...Have you ever felt that?"

Jerrold, exhausted as she was, stroked her hair. "I'd never thought of it Lil. I guess that sounds peculiar. I just have never stopped to think." He himself could hardly believe it. Not thinking about something as important as that. But how could one begin? Could it be approached by thought? Maybe not. Maybe in the instance of death thought wasn't helpful. Why did he know so little? He would go to the library tomorrow and check out some books. He pictured himself as though he were looking on from above. Jerrold Fieldstone bending over the D drawer in the card catalog, picking through the titles and admiring the golden hairs on his arm, his golden wrist watch and thinking about lying in the sun...or making love to Lillian...No, he couldn't learn about death by reading.

All the while he had been stroking her hair. He felt the shape of her head, how impenetrable and hard it was, and the realization that she was another human being, distinct and separate, attached itself to him.

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Lillian let the grey remain. Her friend Friedl teased her.

"I'm going to take you myself to the hairdressers. You're not ready to be an old lady, look at that spring!" She playfully jabbed her finger into Lillian's side. "And look at that bosom!" She thrust out her chest and Lillian laughed. "When I get grey you can take me," Friedl pulled at her dusty brown curls, "but you might have to wait awhile because I don't intend it to happen soon. Come on, Miriam could see you today. She'd give you a nice cut too."

Lillian shook her head. A private smile crossed her face.

Friedl suddenly sputtered, "Are you having an affair?"

"Of course not, why would you think that?"

"I don't know."

"Really, what a silly thing to think. I would never even dream of it."

"There was a funny look on your face and you seem so peaceful and content, I thought..."

"I do?" Lillian blushed. "Oh Friedl," she said. Sun filled the small breakfast room and the two friends laughed.

Whenever she passed the mirror she lifted her bangs to look at the grey. She felt proud. It was more real to her than anything else.

One day after shopping she went to the zoo. It had been years. Zoos generally depressed her. But she felt she had to see something that was alive and yet uncomplicated. She felt so blurred lately, as though her sensations rose to her through layers of cotton. Struck suddenly with the idea that she ought to write her feelings down she took a pad from her pocketbook, tore off weeks of shopping lists, and on a clean page printed carefully:

"There are layers of cotton between my feelings and my mind."

Pleased that she had been able to put it into words she walked past the cages and out to the grazing land at the far end of the zoo. Visitors could stand on a promontory and look over the range. Lillian leaned against the railing. it wasn't close enough to see the animals clustered on the slope. She looked directly below. Twenty slender faces met her gaze. Reindeer. She let out a breath of surprise. They were beautiful. Again she opened her notebook. This time she wrote:

"The thin silver legs of the deer."

It meant nothing but she liked the sound of it. "I love you," she cried to them softly. Their brown eyes held her unblinking.

Walking back to the car she felt different. It was good, she decided, to do things on her own.

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Jerrold's mind hadn't calmed down. He stood in front of the window and stretched. When two people lived together what disturbed one eventually disturbed the other. He had been okay until that outburst. Now he was thinking in circles. That silly panic of Lillian's. Though it wasn't silly. She was right. One had to feel those things. He sat at his desk again. Just have to figure this out, he told himself. he remained still for an hour. Above his eyes he felt a headache forming. He waited till it demanded aspirin and then he left the office, slamming the door behind him.

He called her from the station.

"Hi..."

"What's the matter, Jerry?"

"I'm feeling lousy. Missed my train. The next one



isn't for an hour."

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"Well I guess I'll wander around. See you later."

"Alright sweetheart, goodbye."

Out of habit he walked quickly as though he were late for something important. The streets were flushed with a yellow light.

He didn't even know what it was. Well, something about...Lillian. No, not about Lillian, about...death. Yes. Finally he had said it. What a crazy thing to think about. Death, a one syllable word. It wasn't a final word though, like slam or cup. It was a lingering type. Life, death, less, morose, they all lingered. Especially death. The 'th' sound kept hissing through your teeth. Death, death, death. He said it over and over. Well then, he thought, let's take a clue from the word.

He imagined himself in his white linen suit strutting across the stage. "Death is not a final thing," he said. The audience looked at him, their faces intent. He went on, "It's difficult to comprehend. Let me whisper: deathhhhhhh. I bet you people in the back heard that. The word itself makes you listen. Well who started the lousy rumor? Who had the guts to say that death is the end? I have the guts to challenge that person and I say your lives will continue beyond death!!!" There was frantic applause. A woman in the fifth row stood up. Jerrold motioned for quiet.

"There is a question in the audience," he said.

All eyes turned to her. Her forehead glistened under the house lights. She looked confused. "Mr. Fieldstone," she began.

"Speak louder," he said, "so everyone can hear you."

Visibly she lifted up her voice. "Mr. Fieldstone, how can it be?"

The audience was angered by her question and when they saw that he faltered they began to clap, unwilling to lose their hero. Jerrold looked down at their faces hoping to glean from them the crazy surety he had felt before. A slight dizziness swept over him.

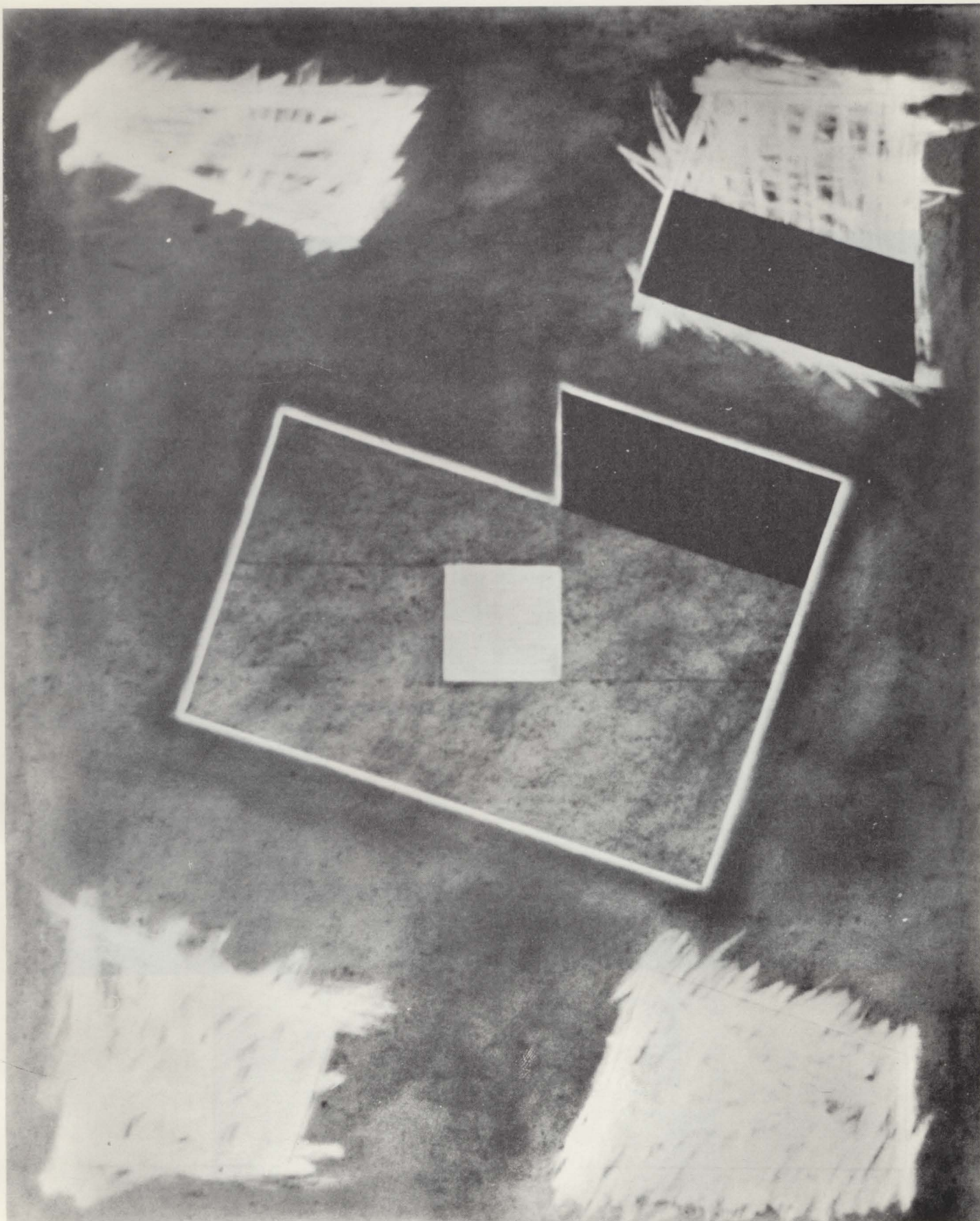
He brushed the dirt from a park bench and sat down. There was a certain feeling he wanted to anchor. Something not yet specific. He sat very still.

Around him the trees grew thicker and the leaves more dense as darkness fell. Shadows disappeared. The crickets began their tireless sound. On the roofs of the buildings that flanked the park pigeons lined up in their places ruffling and beating their wings. Water dribbled from the seraph's mouth and fell in one smooth sheet to the basin below. And from somewhere far in the deeper folds of the city a woman's voice called for a child. He looked down at his hands. The feeling crystallized. He recalled Lillian's fear and played the scene over again in his mind. This time as she wept in his arms he saw the enormity of the thing she had encountered and his hands shook as he pressed her closer.



**Kim Goertner**





*Dan Davidson*



*Peter Bidell*





**An Answer**

*It is what it is with or without you. Within you.  
Enter into agreement. Knife out a darkness, circle it, pillow it.*

*Sleep. Know no blood. Black on black sleeps.  
All is well known, Dream nothing.*

**A Poem For This Winter**

What falls because there is no sky  
falls to the ground.  
All begins to grow.  
The houses arrive in time to protect.

The music, my bed not being made,  
the hammers on the table,  
today, tomorrow.  
Such shallow applause when winter arrives

means nothing. The dog is still on its chain.  
I am afraid to open the door and let  
myself in. I am an obvious man  
with such obvious excuses.



## Historical Reminiscence

“Those violent days were better.  
The times of such a grand indifference  
to life and feeling.”

Robert McAlmon “Historical Reminiscence”

Shoulders in the sand.  
That was years ago.  
That was one morning  
when the peaches broke  
from their crates, scorched  
melons scoured the countryside.  
Your stomach bulged  
pregnant and all acts  
were true. There was little  
grass on the island.  
Our elbows rubbed with  
stone, our knees with  
weed and fossil.  
Open wounds.  
Did we salt our fish?

## The Flood

Yes, the most concrete is strangest.  
How our places stand in the sun,

rain, have sides of their own.  
A door to the river, a door to the road.

It is as if *we* stood  
in the corner of a field

and were whipped only to enjoy it,  
only to cast shadow.

How does it sound?  
To be left forgotten?

Or how does it sound  
to be left alive?

When the basements are filling  
the families panic.

Yes, then,  
only then.



## A Small Sketch

What to call it? Not a thing.  
Her hair as she combs it, turned  
as she is turned, turns into herself.  
Nothing there. What to call it?  
A cigarette. This happens too often.  
It's embarrassing to talk about.

Travelling is expensive. They could  
long for a world long waited for,  
but no. They go ahead, they go  
into the dark, everyone has been  
there. They know this, nothing helps.  
By morning night appears worse.

Nothing is worse. Certain birds  
have no coloring on their wings,  
no appetite for the seeds they've  
set out. Who can blame them,  
this has happened so many times.  
There is no one to blame.

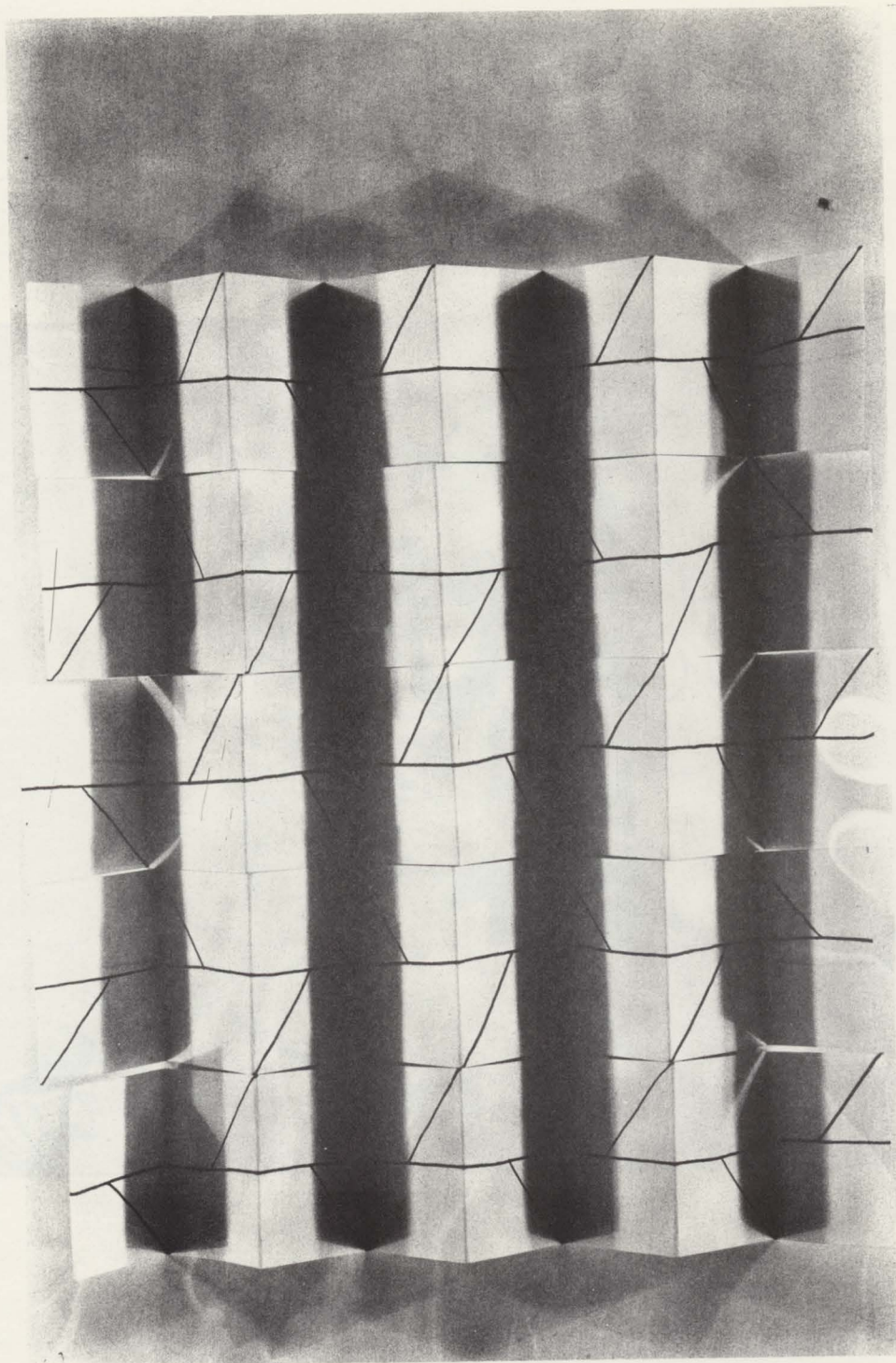
## **The Globe**

The legs of my chair are remote corners: dark,  
struggling nations. How far I have travelled.  
When the sun comes up the boy has only one arm,  
his father a limp, his mother a perfect lump

in her breast. Is there any other way?  
When my face turns it goes to the page.  
I have muscles from turning so much away.  
My calves, ankles, I don't know.

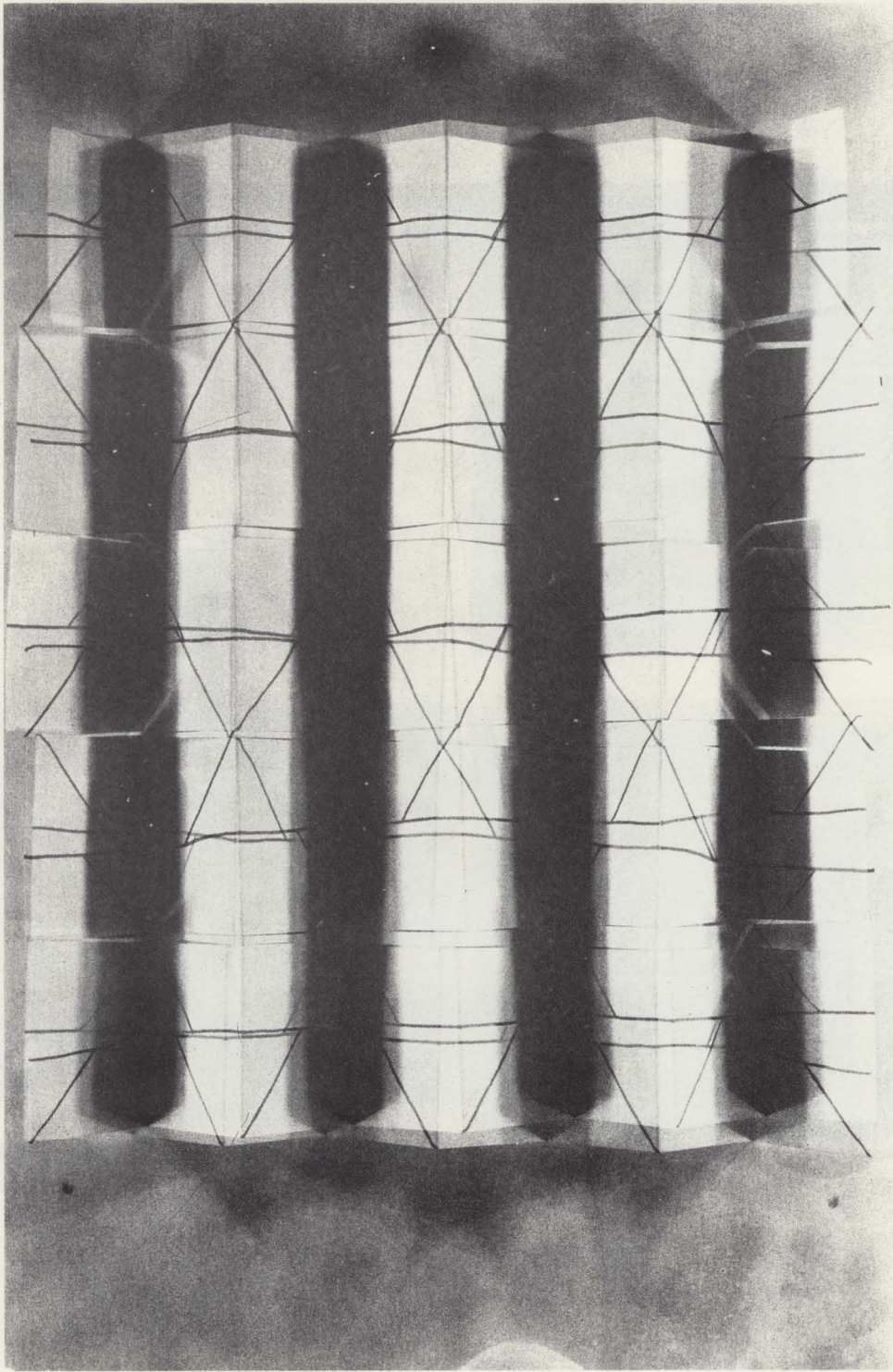






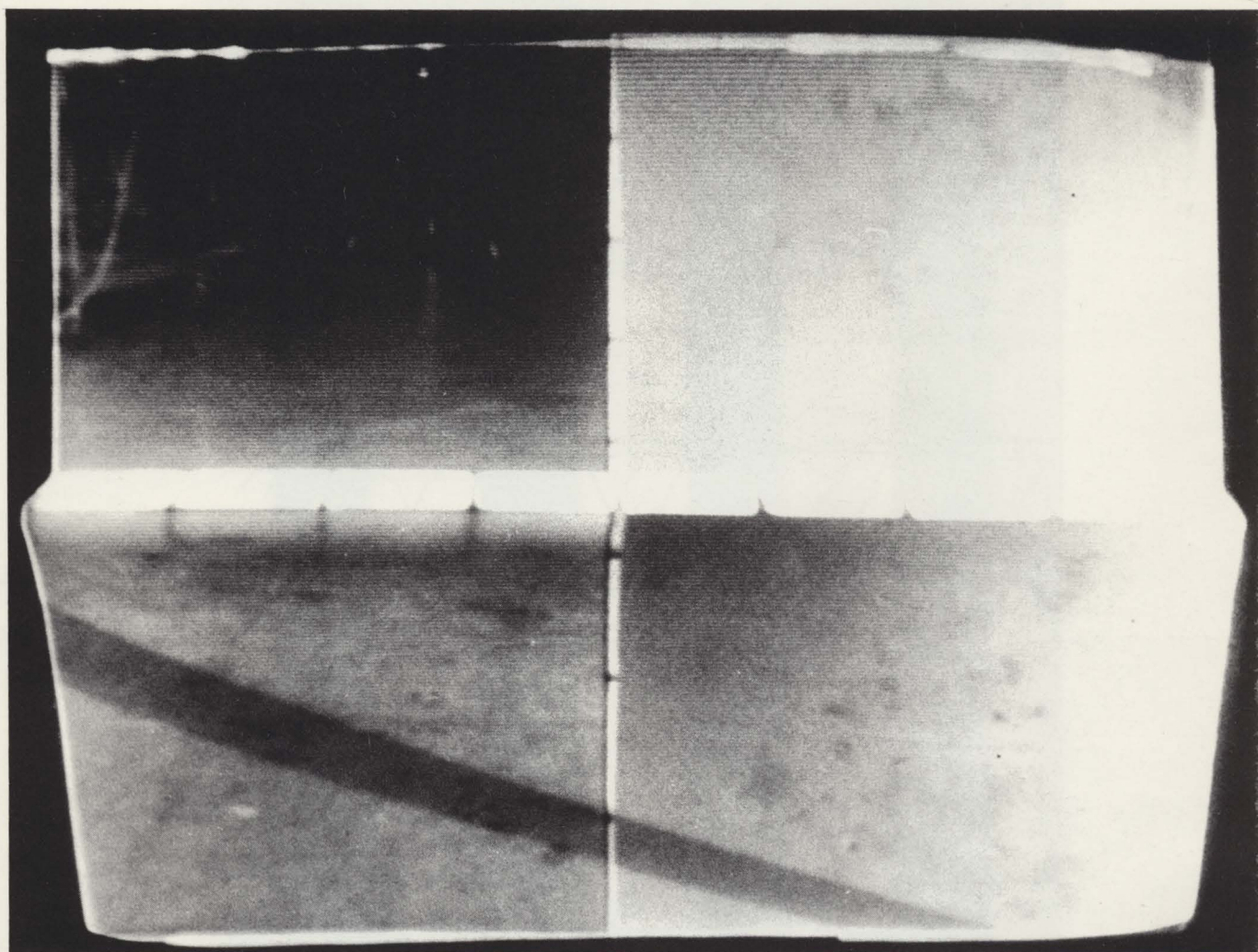
*Dolores Iorizzo*





Will Archer: Three Photographs

Richard Scudlark



*Harland Snodgrass*





*Will Archer: Three Photographs*







You show the turns of endearment absurd: the hold,  
caresses. Longing, I could the way make love  
to you as to this tender light in this winter sky.

Lord, I cannot see you. I  
have nothing else to examine but my mind.  
It is extraneous. I look for you there.







There is a want which places us and one  
which hinges out. I have mistaken one  
for other or, wanting other, taken one.

William Bronk