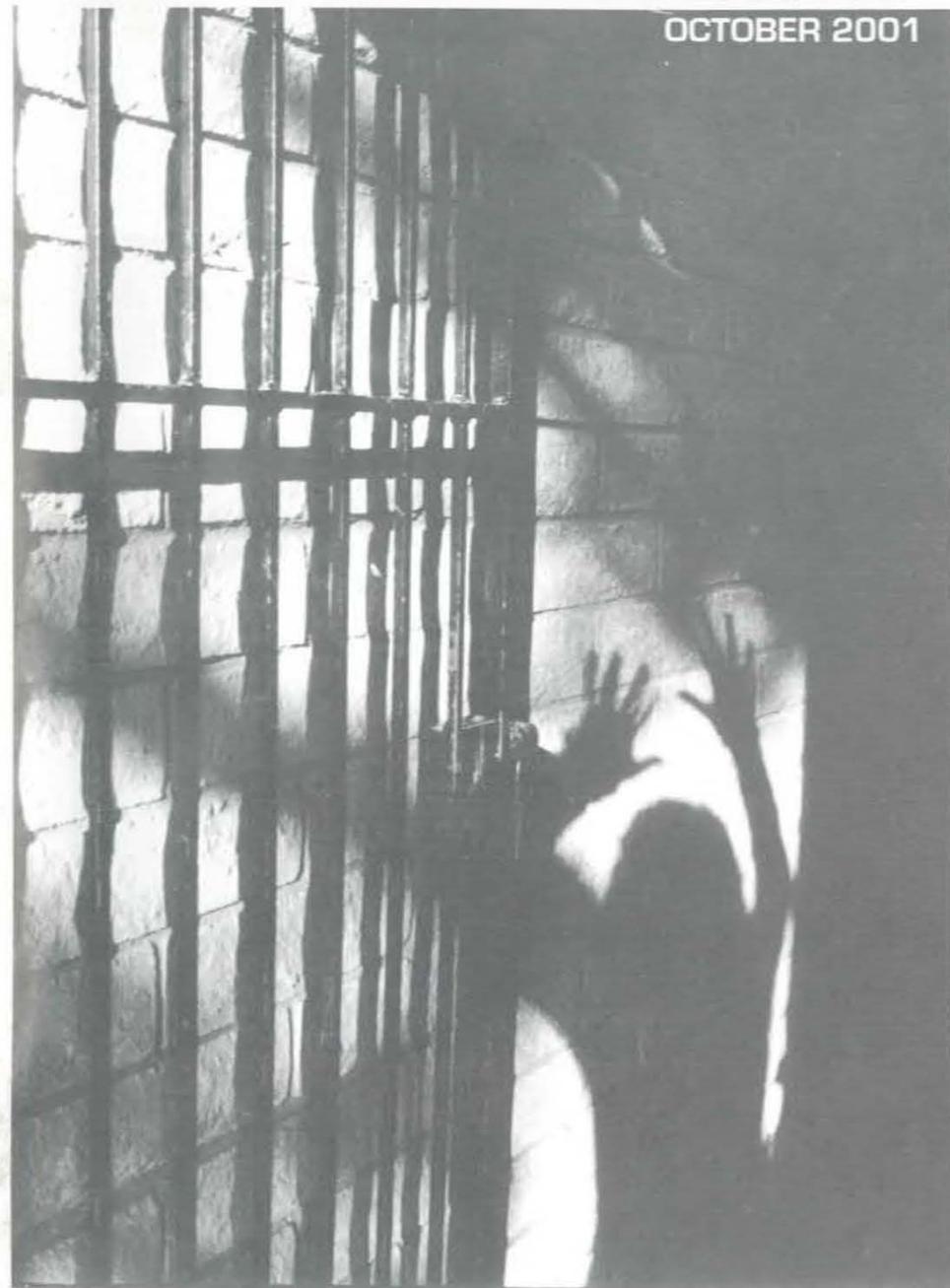


Who is bought and sold? Who is beyond the law? Who is free to choose? Who salutes longest? Who prays loudest? Who dies first? Who laughs last?



The Other Side

October 2001



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photo on this page and the cover by jessica sisto

THE EDITOR'S DESK

My high school literary magazine was called "NorthStar," and it was traditionally the property of the hip, artsy kids in school. A couple of my friends and I worked on it after school, laughing about the ridiculous submissions and pretending we knew how to use the layout software. It was a surprise to discover that my sleepy suburban high school harbored some amazing writers and poets. One of my best friends, Josh, wrote a story entitled, "Jason and the Spice Rack." He told the story of Jason and his dysfunctional parents: a mother hooked on cigarettes and exercise equipment, and a father resorting to hunting with a bow and arrow and constructing spice racks in an effort to deal with fear of the imminent apocalypse. It was hilarious yet poignant and honest.

It took us a few months to come up with one issue, but we were pretty proud of our magazine when we finished. Our final step before publication was approval by the school board. We were a little nervous about some of the content. We had decided to include some poetry and stories with sexual themes and mentions of drugs and alcohol. It turned out that everything was approved, except "Jason and the Spice Rack," which came back with a note. Apparently, there was some reference to pesto in the story (probably in relation to a spice rack) and the wise and worldly members of the school board didn't know what pesto was, and were worried that it was a drug reference.

This incident taught me a valuable lesson about authority and expression. It was quite evident that the members of my district school board were not people with any connection to the real world of spice racks, magazines, and high school kids, and I realized that there really is no link between authority and wisdom.

I believe in creative expression. I believe that there are kids hiding in their dorms with brilliant stories floating around their heads and lingering on their computer screens. I know that sharing ideas is important and powerful. I have poured over issues of The Other Side and been inspired. I have experienced the passion and controversy that the magazine provokes. The Other Side is your magazine, and it is here so that you can write about pesto and take pictures of spice racks and we can all scandalize each other with our boldness and crazy outpourings of angst and joy.

-Stephanie Forman

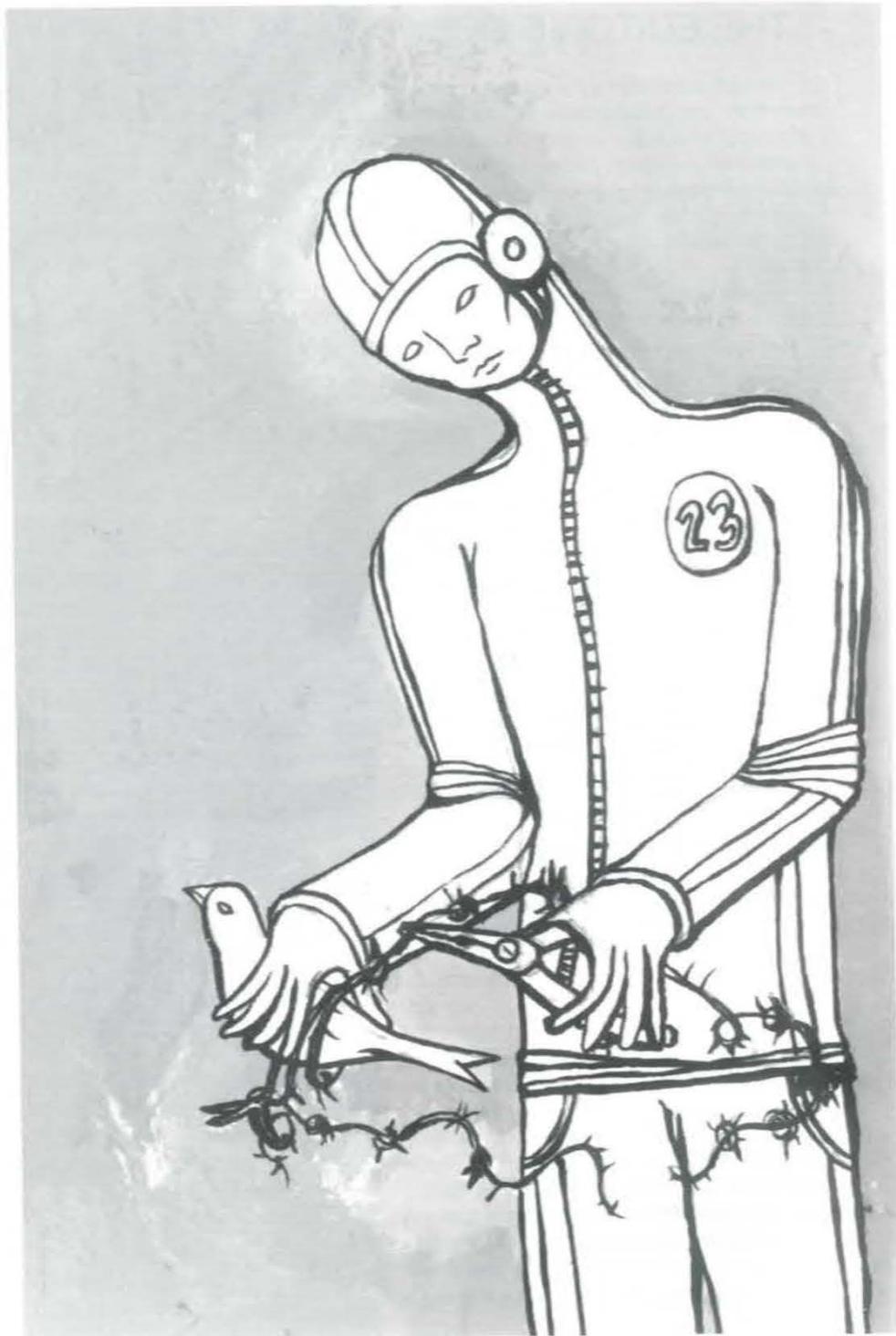
Envision, if you will for a moment, The Other Side as a helpless crippled baby llama, gurgling and twitching in a construction site. It cannot move, nor can it really cry out for help other than to make the only audible sound it is capable of making, which, as it happens, is not a particularly communicative sound because the average layman is surprisingly inexperienced at distinguishing one llama cry from another, and the construction workers—or students, as they are called by professors and other students—who happen upon this sorry llama can do little else but move it out of the way of the bulldozers. However, to the curious, to those with aspirations of discerning a slightly subtler shade of meaning from the surrounding rubble, there is another avenue of action available to be taken. One can, seeing this weak bleak llama, flip the cute languishing creature over onto its back and there, tattooed across its belly in black Bic ink, is several pages worth of modest poems, mildly vague photographs, and purposeful writings assembled under the innocuous title of "The Other Side". Pore through the tick-ridden belly fur and sift out the allusions, the ambitions, the striving for meaning implicit within all of it. And then, if you don't like it, throw the little llama into a trough of still-drying cement and realize what a good story that will make later. And then submit that fine tale of surreal sadism to The Other Side.

And, in parting, I will say, quite straightforwardly, that The Other Side is a magazine.

"Vagueness is a Virtue",

-britt brown

9-11-01



by rob bellm

It's rather quiet. Actually maybe it's just me. I feel quiet. Heavy in the pit of my stomach. Was it just me or were there less smiles on the sidewalk as I walked to this class. Was everyone more solemn, quieter as I walked by. Or was it just my feeling soaking my vision, my sight, my steps as I came here. Who knows? It seems there might be one thing on everyone's ~~life~~ mind on everyone's life today that no one mentions except the professor who says indirectly "How is everybody today? Not so good I guess."

And we leave it at that. Try to start early, the student leaves cause his friend goes to NYU which is "right there" "right there" nods solemn, not knowing appropriate expressions of grief, astonishment, fear, especially humor.

Our teacher cracks me up
\$128.33 & is the total for our books. They all came up.

Yolanda
Diaz

Apuntes: Black Queer Narrative 9-12-01

BN/QN: Nationalism

- historical memory of black nation
- discourse on the value and meaning of nationalism

And I notice that those in power who are speaking to the country through the media are men. And the first thing out of Bush's lips were "lets hunt them down and retaliate" Now the country seems to desperately be searching for someone to blame and kick the shit out of. Dare I say that this is an "aggressive male response" reflecting the men who are in positions of power. If everyone who has said anything that people would listen to nationally was a woman, what other questions would we ask? How about, "Why?" What led to this extreme violence. I don't think it was some ~~it~~ abstract racially ARAB/Islamic presence with a sole purpose of threatening/destroying the "symbol of American freedom" that Bush called the World

trade centers. What complex, human, historically situated, background created the ~~place~~ place for this to happen. Created the people who did it? What were they trying to say, because this is a message. No doubt. Somebody somewhere was screaming their head off and the world wasn't listening. And the highest, most privileged, powerful empire in the world (the U.S.) did not respond either.

- Identity has a historical materiality
- The assertion of a black queer discourse

Watermelon Woman

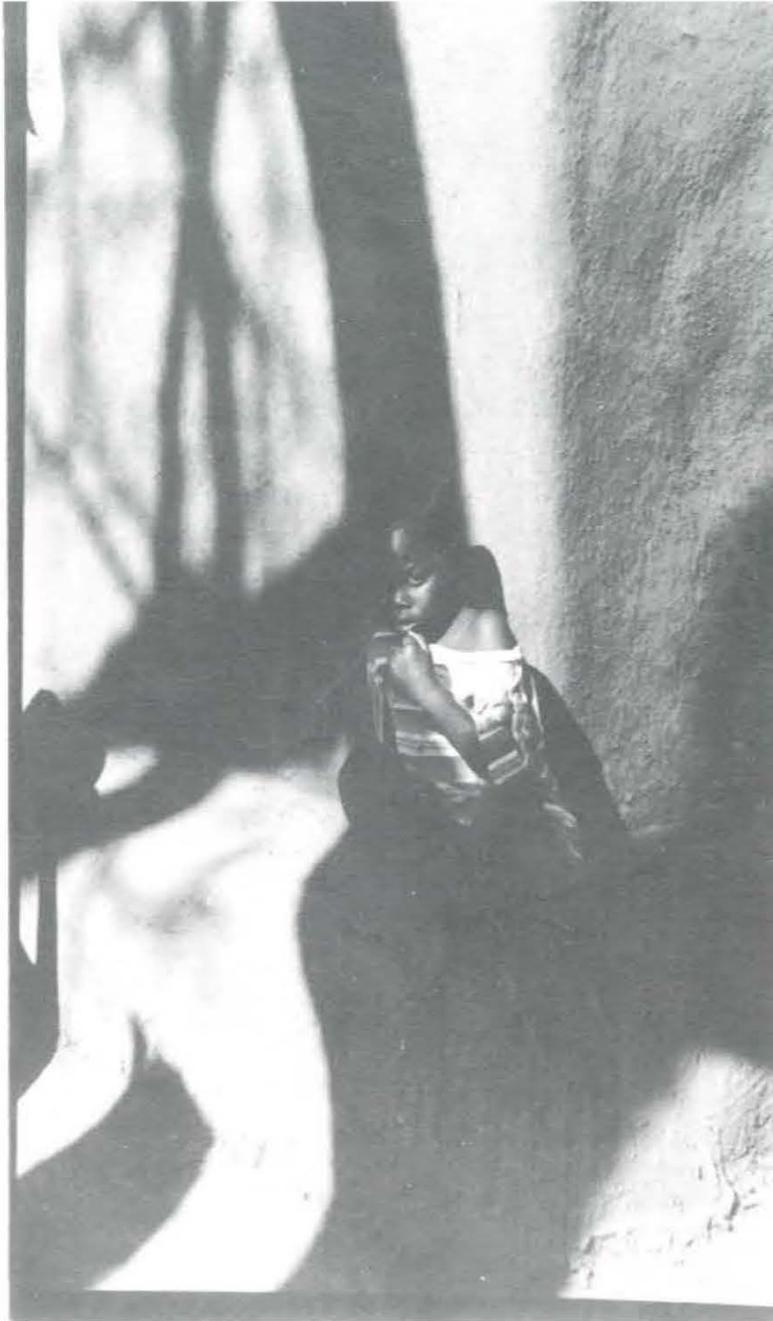


photo by katie crain

9-11-01

I sit, staring at the television. I don't know why. My brain is already seeing the building collapse over and over again. I am not hearing any sounds, nothing, silence scrolling through my head. Everything feels numb. The implication of the picture being presented to my senses is overwhelming and beyond the capabilities of comprehension. My eyes feel dry; they hurt from the staring. I can still hear her voice over the phone. A mixture of the pain, the tears, the shock flowing to my ears from the receiver, the sound was not hers, it is not hers. I want to be there, to hug her, to cry with her. Slowly I can feel the fear building, the anger forming, all my mental capacities arguing with one another. How...? Why...? I do not think I can form a coherent thought. It is all rushing so fast. Massive chaos, confusion...I feel sick. As if the TV's images somehow infected me with illness. Flashes: hot to cold, the nausea, the throbbing ache in the pit of my stomach. I feel...I feel out of control.

Leanne Stein



photo by david stahlin



by judi lieberman

So we spend the afternoon listening to the garbage disposal
mutilate remains of our lovely picnic,
watermelon rinds and corncobs.
And now you're decapitating heads
of lettuce
and severing slender
stalks of celery.
Life lived tentatively
I dodge daylight
to bask in the security of shadows
searching for sustenance
in the form of one phone call
and a lingering cigarette.
Until I'm caught again
but that doesn't matter
because you never picked fresh apples from trees
that weren't yours.
I won't leave footsteps to follow
for you'll know it's I who tracked mud across your floor.
I wonder how my presence got dirty
then ask myself do you know what it's like to have a hand between
your
legs in a darkened movie theater?
I can't stand the sound of their bodies clunking against the porcelain
sink
and when you ask me what's wrong I answer
when was the last time you felt the sun on your naked back in
springtime?

by alizah salario

Osmosis in the Short Time of the Soul

The human body is ninety eight percent water—a center held in the rushing past—the net dredging prismatic mists—substance filters through in the shape of need—a certain residue of dreams, containing—feeling how it feels to have felt—remembering—a long line of embraces recollected as passionate miscommunications—It was too dark to see

and I had to fumble with the clasp. I finally got it open but when I looked up she was gone and now I'm here with you talking about the night we almost made it—the milk

spilt over the edge of the wooden bowl—a limited instrument, siphoned by each vacuous singularity—measures of flotsam and jetsam—white rice in the head—sustenance sustaining—I may have been

in love once it seems possible, but I can only remember her gnarled feet and the things she would say during sex—light is shed—the seeker is sought—the heart is a fibrous muscle grows that grows stronger heat—thinking of her dance worn dresses hung in the closet—photosynthesis occurs and we grow wise and die all at once.

by ben mirov

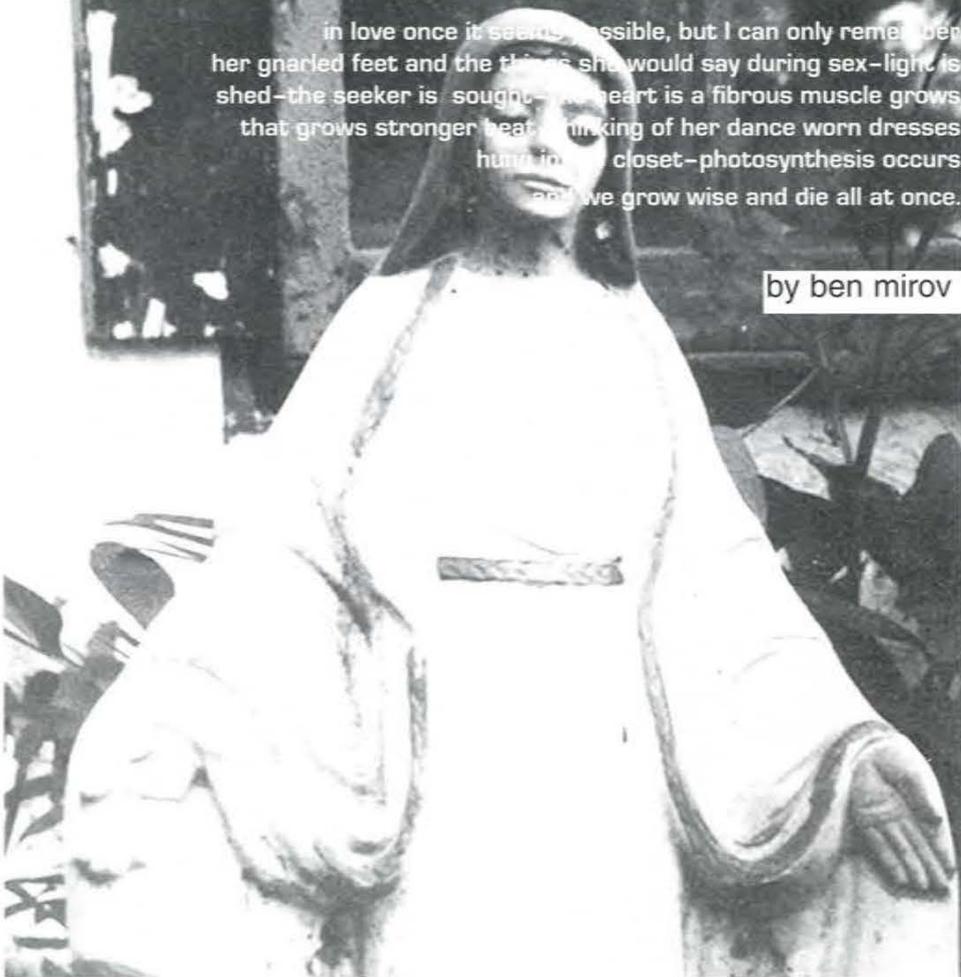


photo: britt brown

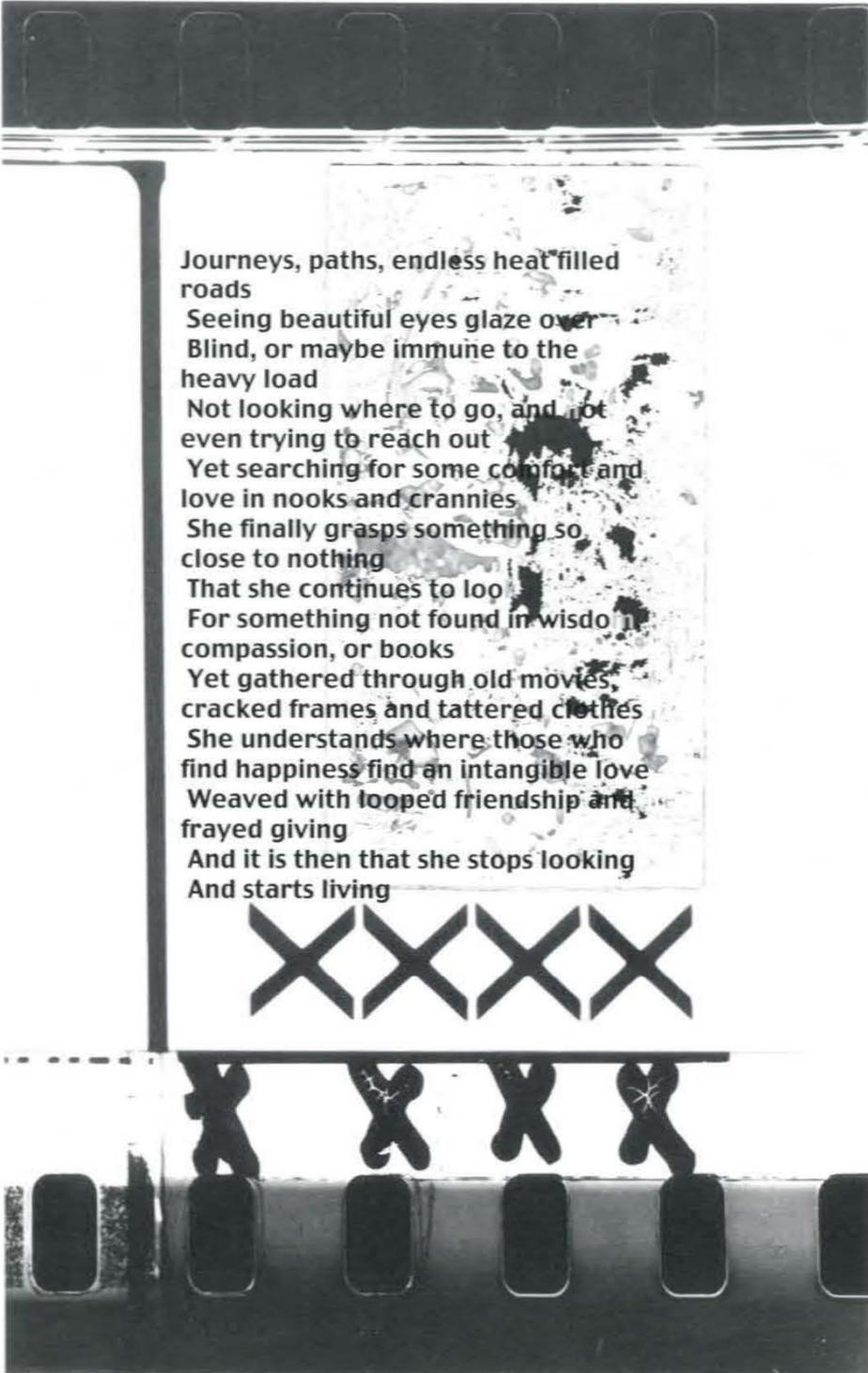
To awake in disaster
after dreaming
her long lost love
comfortable limbs
comfortable laughter
my friends never
woke me for breakfast
soon almost anger



photo by jessica sisto

my cold bowl of cereal
where there is hiding
eating
the crunching
hurrahs
of some middle eastern daughter
of our friends and loved ones
where is there disaster
where in the rubble
blood stained laughter
what is disaster
their laughter
laughter

by taylor fox



Journeys, paths, endless heat filled roads
Seeing beautiful eyes glaze over
Blind, or maybe immune to the heavy load
Not looking where to go, and not even trying to reach out
Yet searching for some comfort and love in nooks and crannies
She finally grasps something so close to nothing
That she continues to loop
For something not found in wisdom, compassion, or books
Yet gathered through old movies, cracked frames and tattered clothes
She understands where those who find happiness find an intangible love
Weaved with looped friendship and frayed giving
And it is then that she stops looking
And starts living

XXXXX

XXXXX

by carmen kiew



h e r h i m t h e m

YOU

MUSHE

WE S HE

t h e y

by jon saltzman

Are you **Boxed In** yet?
It's THE way to
Categorize yourself!
Pick the box that best
describes **YOU!**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> White | <input type="checkbox"/> Master |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Slave |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Us | <input type="checkbox"/> Me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Them | <input type="checkbox"/> You |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Citizen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrant |

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We condemn the increase in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination, threats and violence in the wake of the horrible tragedies in New York and Washington D.C.

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The Using of Objects

I walk in the door, want to slam it, think better of it, and squeeze the knob hard instead, trying to crush it, and push it closed hard, like I was pushing it off a cliff. It still sounds like a slam but sounds are coming out of the kitchen and I doubt she can discern the subtle, expressive complexities of the single object closing shut.

I walk down the hall, drop my backpack roughly, like I was dropping it off a cliff, and go in the bathroom. I turn on the faucet as hot as it'll get and sit on the closed lid of the toilet. It's hard on my ass as I put my head in my hands and stare at the trash in the trashcan, full of used objects—kleenex, q-tips, floss, hair—expelled and effaced parts of the body, all decaying away, being used up and wiped off by white objects.

After breathing a few moments, I stand up and go over to the sink and put my hand under the steaming water. I clench my teeth as the water burns my skin and with my other hand I hit the side of the sink. I notice my grimacing face in the mirror and fling my hot wet arm at it, splattering droplets of water across its flat surface. Lots of them are too heavy to keep their position, so they run down, some of them bonding together as they fall, and drip off, away, and they land on the ground and break.

After buttoning up my shirt sleeve, I step out of the bathroom and walk to the kitchen. Her back's to me, her arm's flexing as she grapples with something on the counter. She's wearing a shirt I like.

I step to the side of her to see what's going on and neither of us exchanges greetings, but I'm not surprised, and it's difficult to tell from the outside who even cares.

She's holding a can of peaches in her left hand and a can opener in her right, and the hinge of the can opener is wobbly so she's struggling, prying at the stubborn metal. The openings she has made, which there are a number of, are awkwardly torn, with jagged edges of ripped steel jutting upwards, somewhat violently. I look at her small white forearms but don't have any trouble imagining her wreaking such havoc, inflicting such damage.

She gets frustrated and sets the can on the counter and stabs it with the can opener's protruding edge. It sticks in with a dull sound and then she tears it upwards, knocking the can on to its side, some juice bleeding out.

"You don't use it like that," I say, reaching for the can opener.

She pulls her hands away from me and sets the can upright. "I can use it however I want," she says, and then, more violently than before, stabs the already mangled can with the opener.

I say, "You're gonna destroy the peaches."

"They're mine." She glances up at me, hard, before turning back to the objects she is using. She mumbles, her voice straining with her exertion, "They're supposed to open..."

"Well there's no point in destroying them if you don't have to. Twist the knob on the opener. I'll show you if you want," I offer.

She sets the peaches down and holds the opener with both hands. She shakes the wobbly hinge. "It doesn't do what I want it to," she says, frustrated, breaking.

"You have to work with it," I explain, noticing her hands beginning to quiver.

"I don't have to do a goddamn thing," she says and stabs the can in its side, knocking it across the counter, and then she pounds the can opener against the counter, knocking it into several pieces, a few screws bouncing on to the floor.

I look at her as she leans against the counter, sighing with her eyes closed. She breathes a moment and then opens her eyes and looks at me. She blinks slowly, disturbingly calm, before lowering her face slightly and tilting softly, "I can use things however I want to use them." She keeps me in her gaze.

I quickly look at the floor, staring hard at the rigid designs of the tile, and I try to do some things: I try to breathe, I try not to scream, I try not to—I try to breath. I sort of succeed and say, with quiet difficulty, "You know I know you can." I raise my eyes slowly to hers.

She's looking me in the eye in a way I can't really take, in a way that means too much, too many things. I feel my self not being able to hold together so I look down. A moment passes and she mutters, "Christ." I keep looking down at the floor even though there's nothing down there I want to see. Another few moments pass and then she picks up what's left of the can opener and hits it against the can and then drops the object on to the floor I'm looking at and walks out of the kitchen. I stand there a second, and then I hear loud music coming from the stereo in our room. I push my closed eyes with my fingers and lean there, listening to the can of peaches bleeding out across the counter, and dripping down the drawers in little droplets, until they land on the ground and break.



sister jessica

Desolate Visions Preceding a Newborn Artist

Death:

A simple parody of death:

Although death's distance is more profitable than its proximity, I can only maintain that distance with life, but I cannot imagine truly living without death just before me.

Language:

In that hazy expansiveness of possibility, a thick layer just kissing the extending Earth- in honey grass-leaves and blood drops-and just beside the empty river lined with porcelain, I caught the next flight of breeze and it was called Language. The pilot before me coincidentally died upon my arrival, precisely above the spike-laden valley, which after careful inspection was brimmed with the horror of myriad past pilots, whose doom was that of new pilots with a linguistic need for breath. Finding freedom in my autonomous flight, I ventured swiftly through the foliage, collecting trinkets that represented my visit through the wind, examining the porcelain network of sanguineous flow below me, but making sure not to allow anyone upon my personal flight. In fear of mutiny, my swooping adventures toward truth, became hesitant: my hand's extension toward the sun-drops on the grass was quick and not sufficient; I would not allow the hands of aspiring pilots to capture my own, seize them, and send me to my fate. I soon found myself in a position too far from reality, and instead of being able to extract on this magical flight of language the beautifully present moment, the object, the image-my hands picked up a nostalgia of the future-an abstract interpretation of what might Be in retrospect of what I missed most from the beginning of my flight-nothing real. Finally, with the feeling of death desperately pulsating in the visceral-whispering, "I have come, come and gone, and where are you now," I expired with final visions of wilting flowers that were not yet planted.

Love:

"I mentioned her name to arouse in you the same fit of passionate anguish I can't seem to shake. A thousand times this morning I wished to beg you to stay, but I couldn't escape the thought of another man staring at the body which so precious belongs to me, and to me alone, but which, as of soon, is exclusive to me no longer. It is with this passionate rage-a rage that has caused within me war, insanity, and death, at least twice-that I cannot give into your wishes. I want to say that I am sorry and that I will love you forever, but there is a good chance that you will not love me forever. You gave up the courageous devotion that was once your greatest virtue. I am Hamlet-confused by the haunting apparition of you and another love, together-and that apparition is too realistic to simply forgive. I would have forgiven you once, but you declined; you continued to resurrect my lascivious past, and now I must predict your lascivious future. I love you with absolute sincerity, and for that, I am in a perpetual state of desolation."

Happening in exactly that order.

by robert e. sanchez jr.

OH

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3 September 2001

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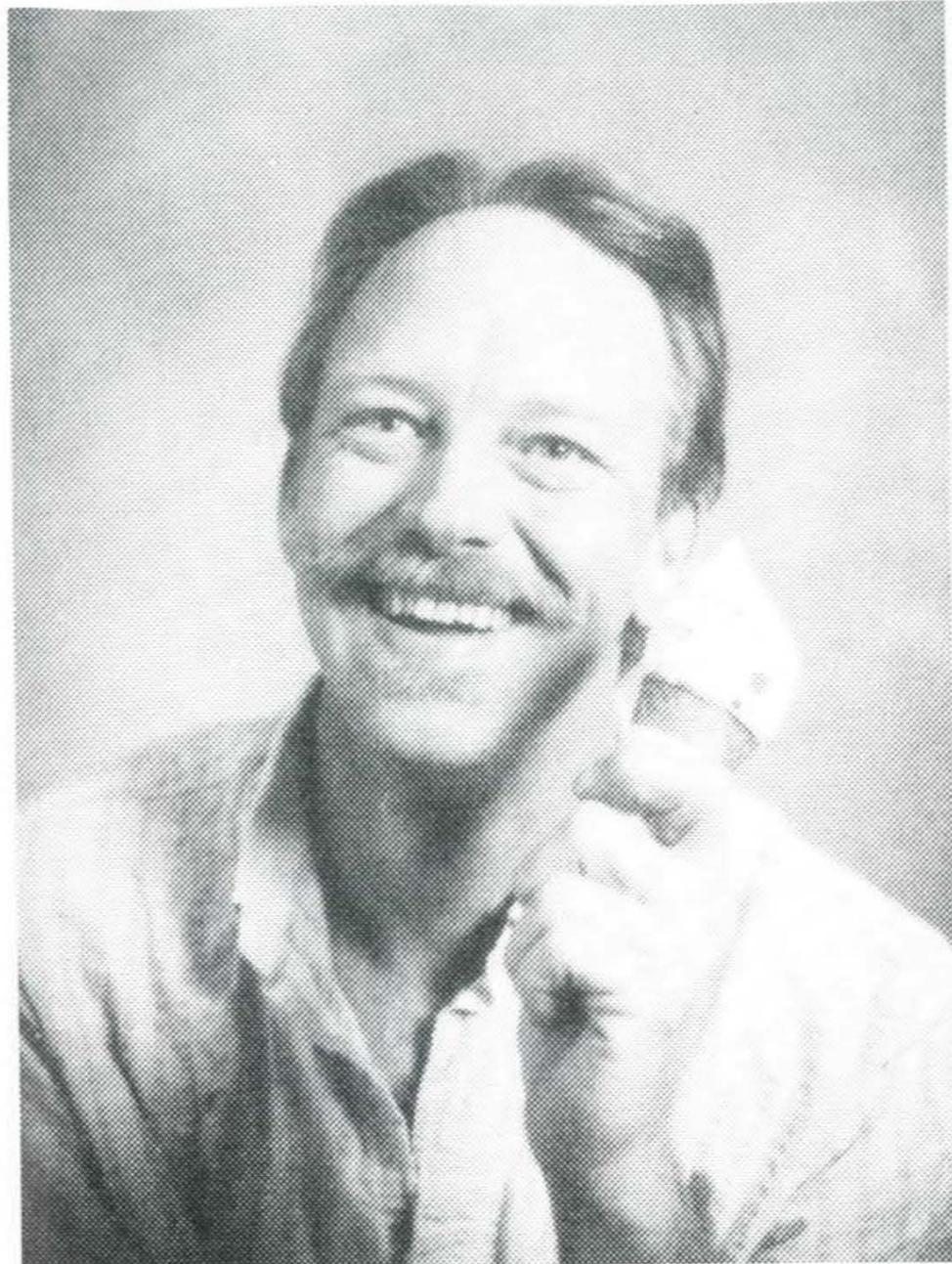
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