



ABSOLUTE

Fall 1988

Absolute

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Sponsored by the Institute of Communications and the Arts, **Absolute** presents a collection of original art and literature by students, faculty, staff, and friends of Oklahoma City Community College, 7777 South May Avenue, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 73159.

Printed at the college, the magazine is issued twice yearly: in the fall and in the spring.

Cover art by Nancy Brashears
Frontispiece,
artwork by Kathy Shirey

Editorial Staff:

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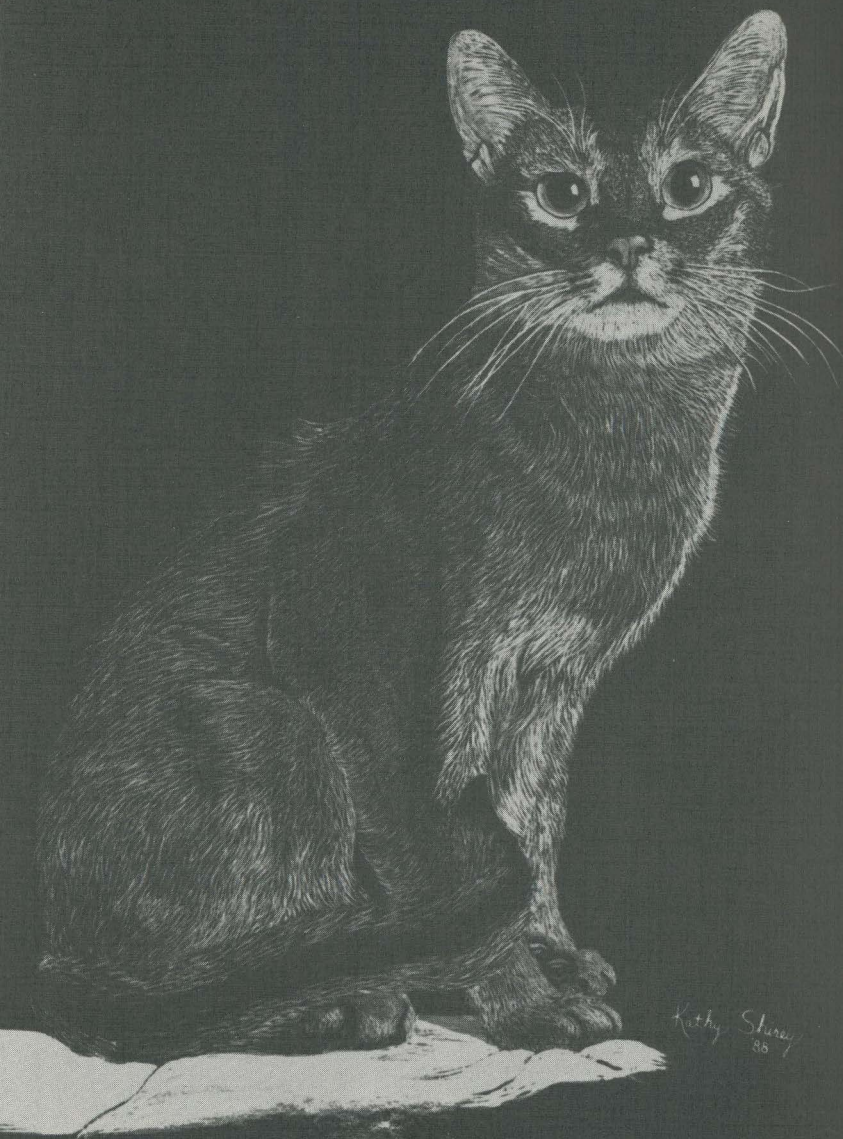
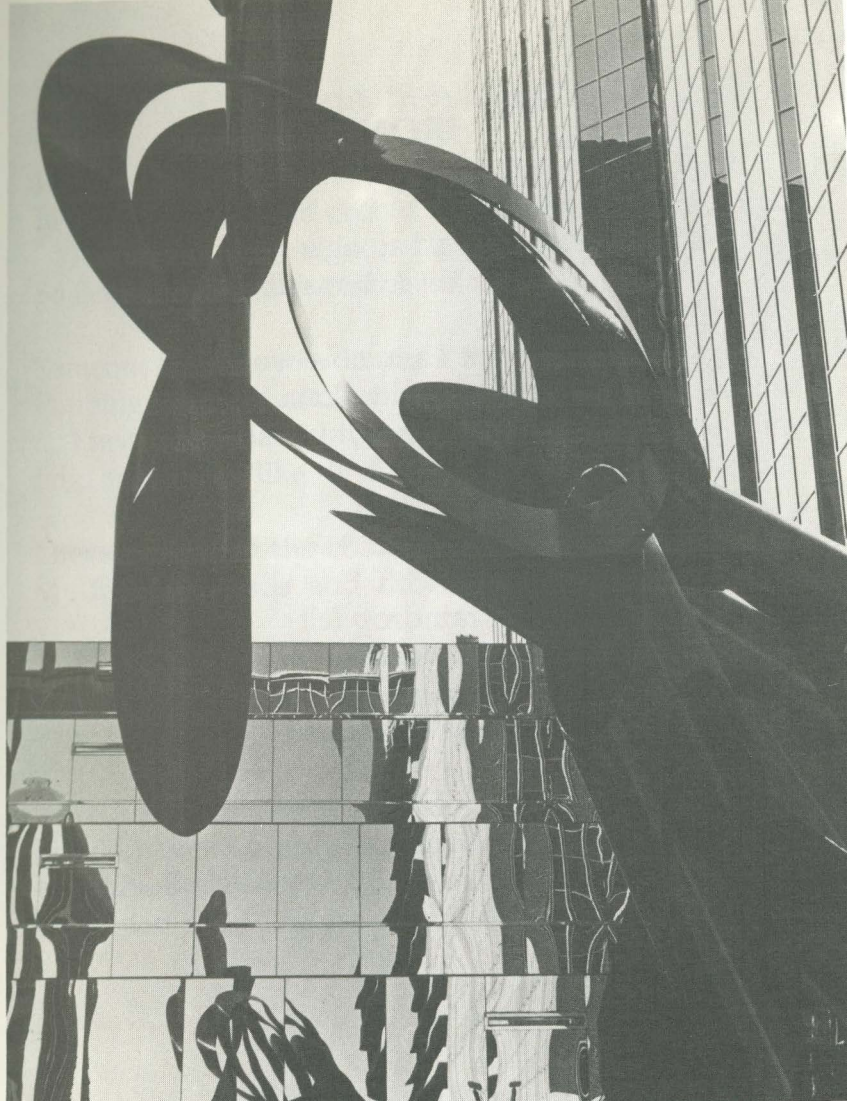


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IRONY

A man walked along a road
and said to himself;

"How great I am, how wondrous
and complex. I am equal
to the Universe!"

Just as he said this
he fell dead.

A solitary raindrop fell
from a cloudless sky.

The universe continued
on.

by Michelle Roberts

Imagination Lost

I have looked all day for my imagination.
In all the corners and crooks and crannies of my mind.
I even looked once in my lunch sack from Tuesday.
So fickle a friend is far too hard to find.

Someone said they had seen it in a few stray pages.
Popping its little head out and pouncing upon words.
I just never should have given it so much freedom.
I did and it flew like those silly, screeching birds.

I never even had the chance to tell it goodbye.
My fond farewells and flowery phrases just flittered out
the window.
It's gone and deserted me without one shred of creativity.
So I sit here chewing cheese and contemplating my big
toe.

Were it with me, oh the wistful words I could have written.
I could have dapperly designed each dazzling line.
If it doesn't come back soon, I'm doomed for all creation.
Or at least until I figure out how to end this rhyme.

by Keborah Matheson



I REMEMBER - A POEM TO MY DAUGHTER

I remember when
I tiptoed to her room
in the middle of the night
so silently as not to wake her
putting my hand near her tiny mouth
to feel her breath
to know she's fine.

So still
and only hours before
she cried for what seemed years
my body ached for sleep
pacing, pacing in the dim light
to soothe her to sleep,
laying her down
but always coming back
to check
one more time.

I remember when
I danced with her
to the beat of Billy Joel,
her little diapered body
fit so perfect in my arms
swinging and swaying to the sounds
till she fell asleep
nestled on my shoulder.
Now when I tiptoe to her room
I still check
to know if she's breathing
the crib is gone
replaced by a bed
my baby has grown up
and I wonder if she remembers when
we danced.

by Angie Beck

THE QUESTION

June 15, 1990

"Can you hate me so much for allowing your son to find his dream" I gently inquired, almost whispering, of the old woman sitting before me. I'd grown to love her, years before, like a mother. Indeed, if I had adhered to the rules of the day, she would now be my mother-in-law. As I waited for her tears to subside and for the answer that would grant me either a peaceful life or a shameful one, I remembered that far-away day when the words "I do" could not be forced from my lips.

May 19, 1970

Everything was perfect. My sister and niece were dressed in pink and looked as though they themselves were about to be married to the prince of their dreams. Even the flowers in the garden seemed dressed for the occasion. My aunt, who had agreed to play for us, sat poised at the piano. She and her instrument looked as though they had resided in the garden since the beginning of time, just to perform on this day; then, mission completed, would be content to slip silently away. Indeed, Eve couldn't have asked for more.

As the music started, I began to walk. As I placed first one foot and then the other on the grass below me, the green seemed to go on endlessly. I feared I would never reach the end, and I guess I never did. My soon-to-be-husband, rather shaken by the whole ordeal, restlessly waited. He looked to me like a child on Christmas...biting at the bit to tear away the wrappings and discover his new toy. A shudder came over me, and my feet froze for an instant; I wondered if I, like so many other toys, would lie broken and forgotten at the coming of the New Year. The clearing of a throat beside me--I don't know whose--brought me back to the matter at hand.

As I floated on, I saw the families...separated like Moses' Red Sea...on either side. I, alone, stood in the middle to join them to each other. I saw my mother with tearful eyes and wondered for whom the tears were shed. My father sat beside her. He, being absent for so much of my life, had no claims on me: I had refused to let him give me away. I walked the gauntlet alone.

On I walked. Past the smiling, tear-stained faces. It seemed to me that the longer I walked, the more the faces became simply teeth and water. If Stephen King were in attendance, he would have said I was traveling through the beginning phase of digestion: I would be chewed, and lubricated, and swallowed finally like an evening meal.

The man-in-waiting smiled...my mind relaxed. I had finally reached the finish line, or so it seemed to me. And, then, when it came my turn to speak, to give my love eternally to the man beside me, I could not. I tried! Oh, how I tried! But that part of me that knew I was a lousy actress clamped my lips tight. It decided that now was a good time to end the program.

June 15, 1990

A door slammed, pulling me abruptly from my memories. The brother of the man I had loved stood there, his face red with anger. "Why are you here? You've caused enough pain...Get out!" he screamed.

The woman looked up and chided her son. "Leave it alone! She's come to speak with me." The man reluctantly sat down, eyeing me suspiciously. I felt the dark eyes of his mother turn again to me. "It's all right," she said, "I think I understand."

Her questioning look made me attempt to explain. "We could never have been happy," I stumbled. "We wanted two different things...him a family, which he has now, and me? I wanted

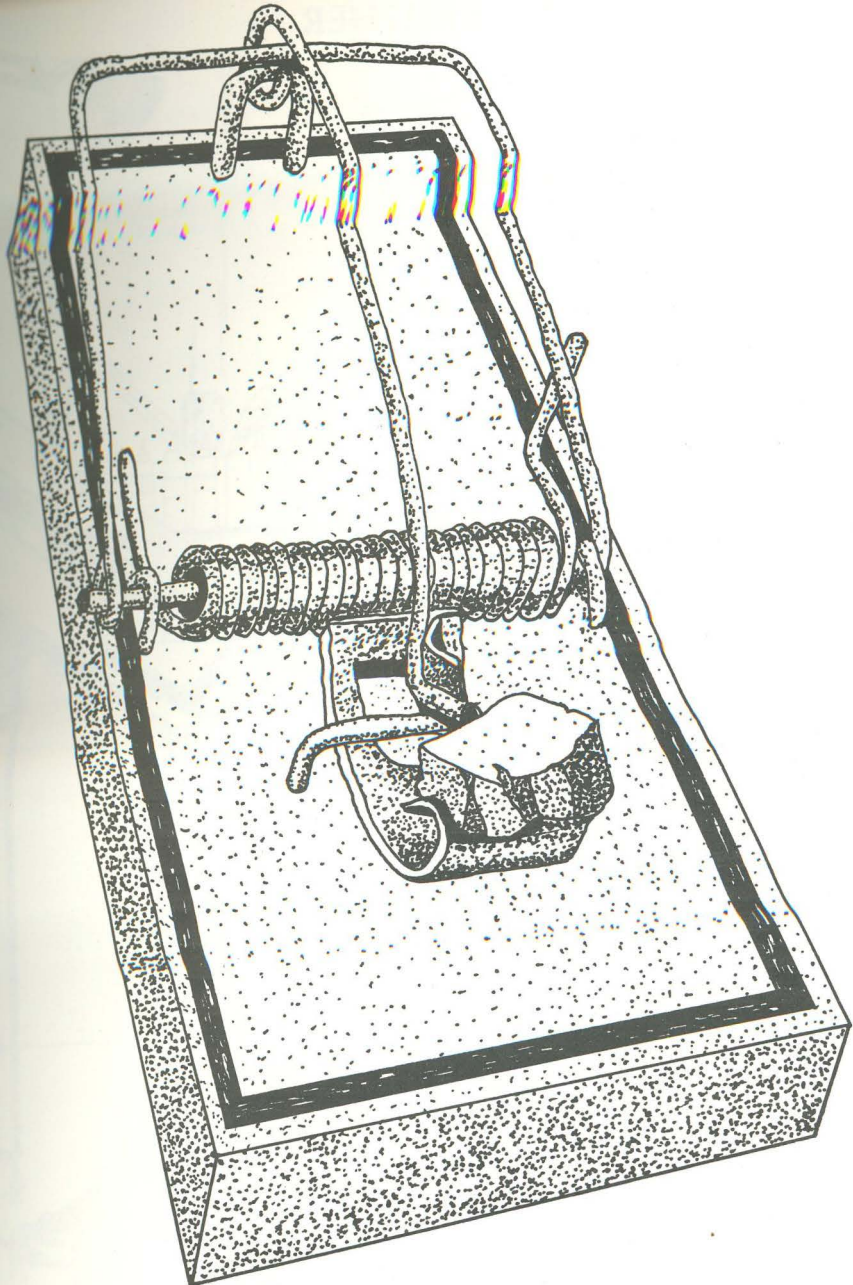
something more. We've both found what we were looking for. We just could never have found it together. I'm only sorry that I didn't realize it sooner. I...."

"It's okay," she said, stopping my flow of words.

As I walked to the door, I looked back on the two sitting there: the woman who could find forgiveness in her heart for me and the son who never would. And I wondered at the differences in the two. To her, I was a forgiven and misunderstood hero. To him, I was a coward and a traitor.

And to myself...I'm not sure yet.

by Suzanne L. Moore



DANNY ELLIS

MY BROTHER

You
my brother.

You
helped me walk,

You
talked me
into and out of
things

We
fought,
"You brat, get out of here!!
It's private!"

"Hey,
kid,
come 'ere,
I'm sorry."

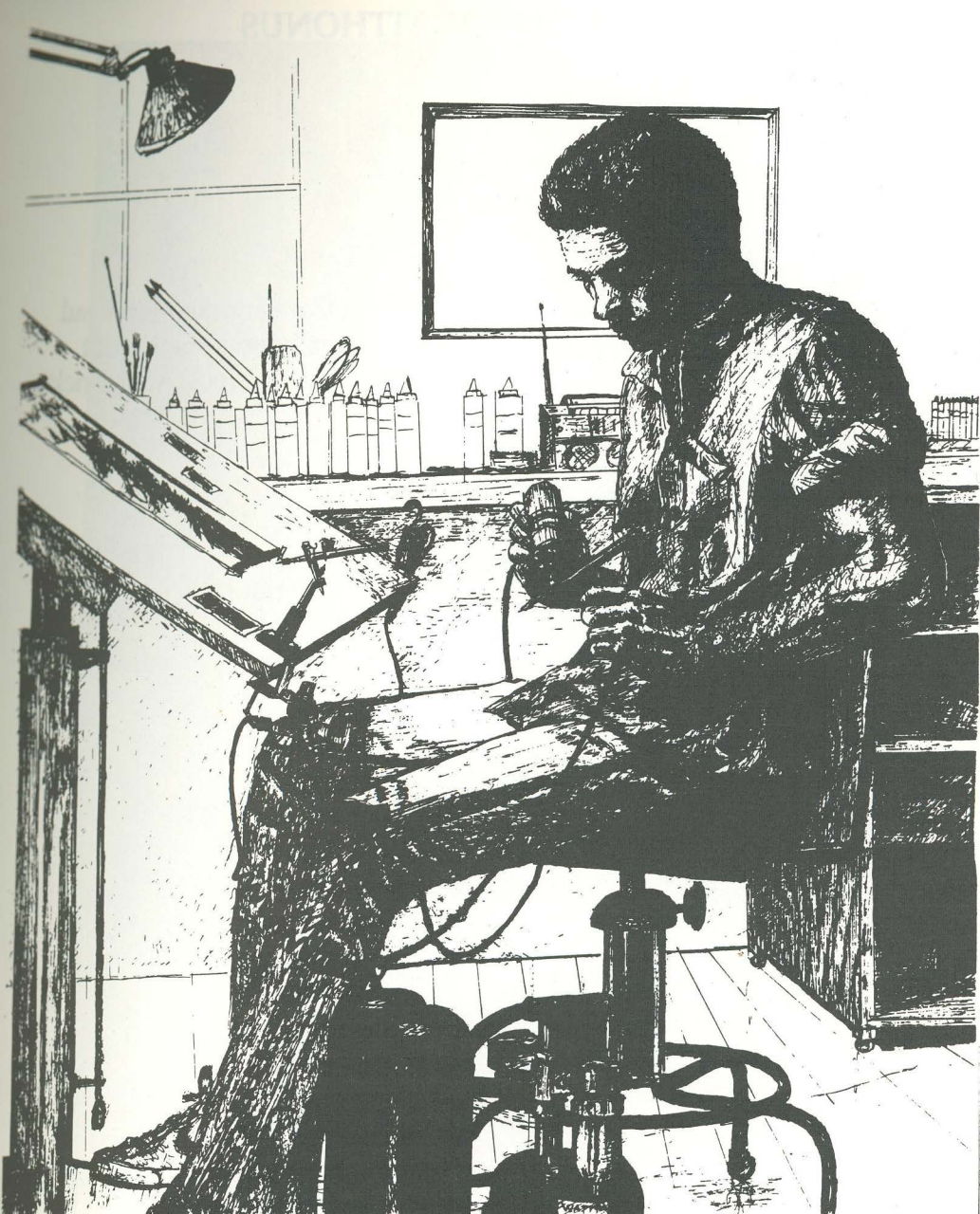
You
moved away,

My love
went with
You,

Yours
stayed with
me.

My Brother.

by Michelle Roberts



TEARS OF/FOR TITHONUS

In the shower
I trace scars--

a winding white waterway
(dead center, left leg)
forged by fences who denied
right-of-way...

A Cain-marked forehead
that knows the impact
of well-bred, Abel brick
walls.

Scars know war stories--

birthings,
rapes,
abortions,

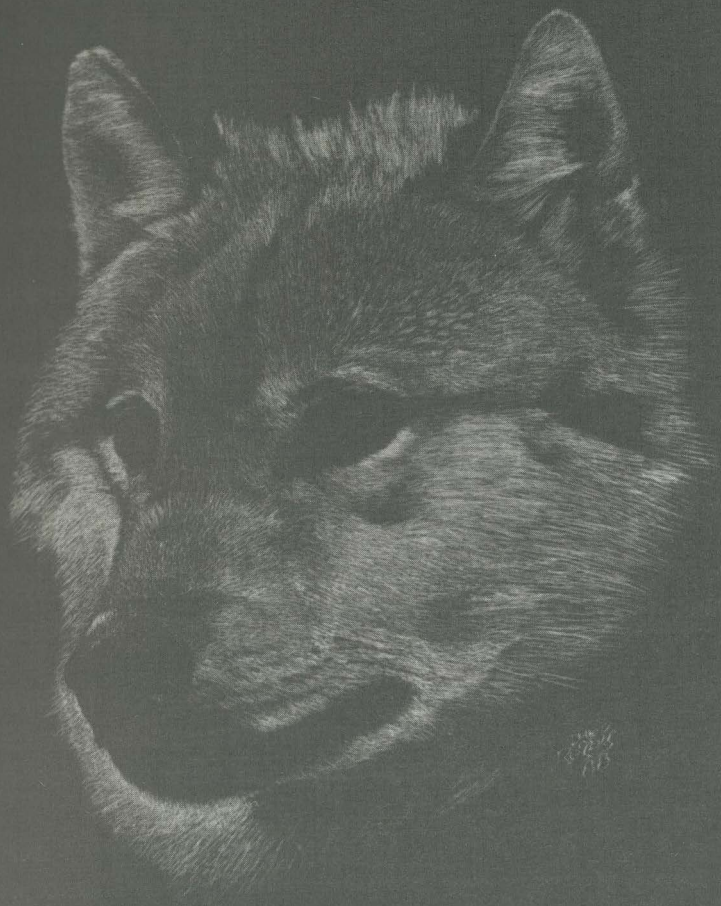
and
I know myself.

Mister,
as you look on
with fire-eyed fascination,
I know this also:

If I could grant you
a Tithonus wish,
the wish would be wasted--

you can never comprehend
the tides of me.

by Suzanne L. Moore



DROWNING

I wake up every morning
Who is this person in my mirror?
Surely it can't be me...

I was strong ---
 an athlete great with promise...
I was strong ---
 I believed in myself and my abilities...
Who is she

I'm looking at a world map.
I see lines and boundaries
where once there were only fields.
Did the animals know
 when they crossed the iron curtain
"Step across this line and it will be a Russian who shoots
 you."
Lines drawn by man...
 to give him excuses to kill other men.

My skates lie in the closet
 unpolished and unused
Skates that were once a part of me...
skates that took me across the continent
skates that won medals with me
Gone like the coaches that I believed in ...
that I thought believed in me.

I look in the headlines...
War in Central America
War in the Middle East
Bombs in Northern Ireland
Guns in South Africa
Homicide, Suicide, Genocide...
Is everyone killing someone?
Wouldn't it be nice
 if all the weapons in the world