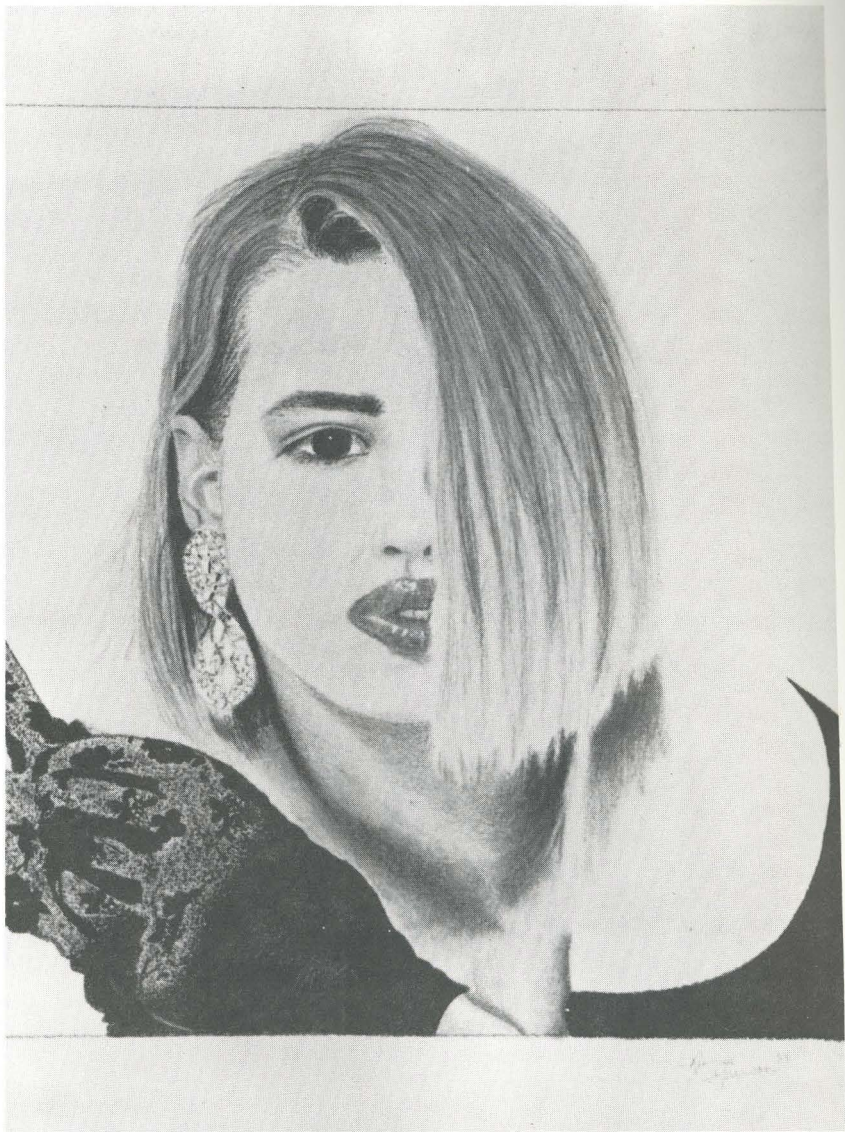




ABSOLUTE

Fall 1989



—by Aemse Garrison

Absolute

Fall 1989

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.

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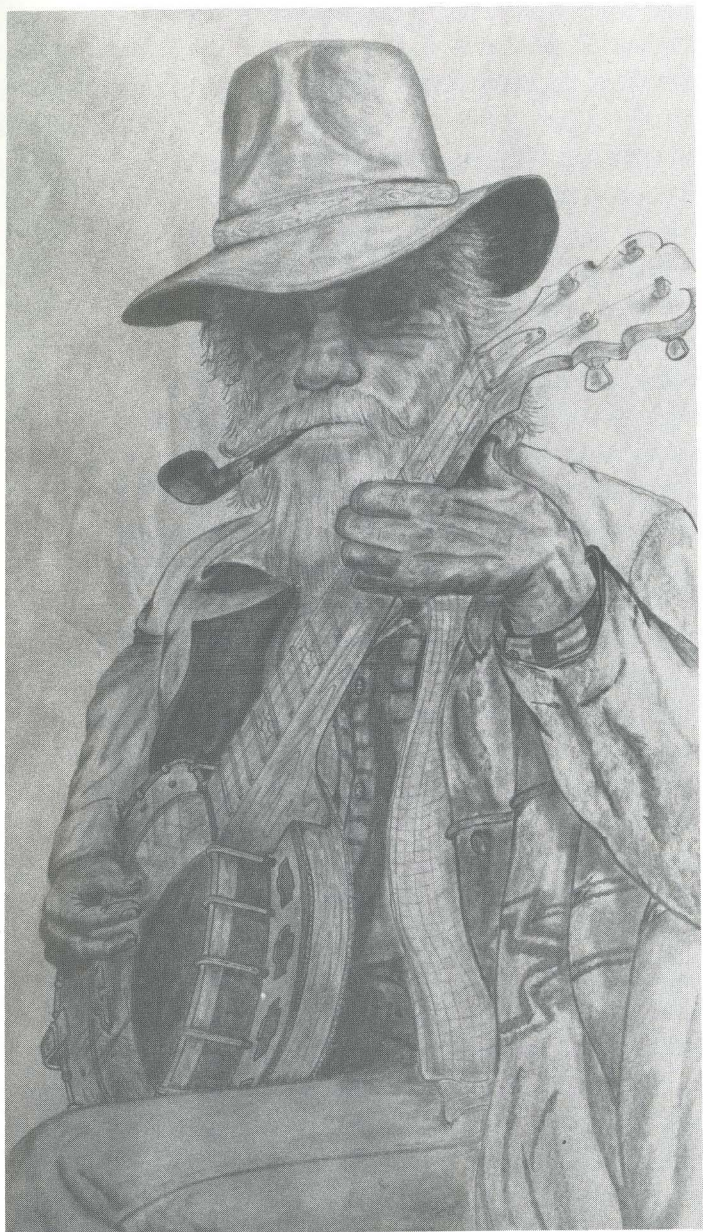
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Oklahoma City Community College, Fall 1989.

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—by J. Mansell

"Storms"

"Maudit! Maudit tempete!" His voice pierced the darkness just before the thunder roared. The blue black sky lit again and again with giant fingers of lightning, in every direction. "Damned storm!" he spoke to himself in the small cave he had found earlier when the rains had stopped his trapping activities.

Jaspere Dutour had only recently arrived in the land the trappers called 'aux arcs'; his brave friends bragged to him about the land's richness: "Many beaver and the fox, too." After weeks of travel through the autumn heat, he had made his way, alone, to the places they had told him about. He was where he wanted to be. With any luck at all, he would have a rich harvest of pelts and he would sell them in the spring and he would have enough money to buy the things he needed for his farm. Gambling was not his favorite pasttime, but when the stakes were success or ruin, he was willing to take the chance.

"Be patient, *mon ami*, be patient," said his partner. "We have a long time to be here. The leaves on the trees have not even started to turn color. It's not time to start the trapping; we can wait."

"*Alors*, why did we come here then?"

"Jaspere. Be patient. You know we came here because not many others are willing to make the trip to this place. They would rather go to the west than to go south along the big river and then west to here."

"Arnauld Brindamour, let me tell you something. I left St. Cosme because autumn was coming soon; I wanted to start the trapping so I could get many pelts: beaver, fox, ermine, otter. I left my wife and children alone for a winter I think will never come...."

Thunder interrupted his speech and he cursed again. And as though the gods of the place had heard him, the rains stopped suddenly. Places in the sky were letting through more light; it looked as though the storm were breaking up. Never had he seen anything at all like this storm. Heavy rains, the large cold drops had slapped against his eyelids, forcing him to stop walking and feel his way through the forest and into the cave. Now it stopped.

It was time for them to go looking for food. The storms had kept them from hunting and there were no fish to catch in the murky ponds. Arnauld reached for his flintlock just as Jaspere went for his.

"Stay here, Jaspere *mon ami*. *Reste ici*. I will find us a good squirrel or something else to eat. You relax; there's nothing we can do about traps today."

"*Bien*, Arnauld, I will stay, but I do not expect you to hunt for me all the time. I, too, can hunt, you know."

"Of course, *mon ami*, of course. But you are too *inquiet* right now; you will scare off all the game that the storm has not already scared away. I will be back *toute suite*, *mon ami*, right away."

Jaspere watched as Arnauld left the small cave and disappeared down into the small valley below the cave. He respected his friend, older and wiser, who had decided at the last hour to make the long journey for this trapping expedition to the 'aux arcs.'

Arnauld was a bachelor who was well-known for his ability to do anything he decided he wanted to do. He worked for wages with whatever farmers needed help. He trapped and hunted to keep meat on his table; sometimes he brought the game to a farmer's home as a self-invitation to a home-cooked meal even though he could cook as well as many of the new brides in St. Cosme.

Now Arnauld was off into the forest to find food. His considerate nature was a burden to others sometimes, but Jaspere was pleased he had not insisted on going. His restlessness had taken its toll; the fierce lightning and thunder had worn him out even more. 'Oui,' he thought, 'I can sleep now since the storm is over. Tomorrow, *demain* I will take my turn.' As he dreamed of himself hunting in the bright sunshine, the picture of that pleasant task hypnotized him into a deep sleep.

* * *

"KARRAAACCKK!"

Flashing light and deafening sound startled Jaspere to sit right up. His eyes opened wide and his ears adjusted to the noise echoing briefly in the confines of the narrow cave. It was black outside

the cave; it was night and as he awoke, he realized he had either slept for several hours or the apocalypse had begun upon the land.

The storm was above him.

"KARRAAACCKK! KAAARRAAACCKK! BOOM!"

Jaspere quickly realized how exhausted the storms had made him. The effort to sit up quickly faded into numbness as he warily yawned to get more breath. In the middle of his yawn, the third bolt of lightning lit up the sky and the land below it, that is, right in front of the cave.

In the light, he caught a glimpse of a figure stooping to enter the cave. It was too small to be Arnauld; besides, the darkness of the cave kept Jaspere from seeing the person's face. It had seemed to him that the figure was wearing only breeches; perhaps there had been a feather in the hair.

The cave was small; he and Arnauld had found it accidentally when the rains had started two days before. Jaspere did not find it difficult to feel the presence of another; the other was close enough; Jaspere could feel the body heat and he was more afraid now than he had been so far.

"Qui estce que? Who is in the cave with me?"

Deep breathing was the only sound in the interval between his question and the roar of the rain outside. Jaspere keenly sensed the intruder who by this time had made his way to the back wall of the cave. Jaspere thought to reach to his left, but he stopped short of doing so.

The next flash lasted long enough for Jaspere's eyes to adjust to the sight of a "sauvage," a savage Indian. Jaspere flattened himself against the wall away from the intruder; the invader moved himself quickly, too.

Jaspere had seen surprise in the Indian's face; in fact, he seemed astonished. It was as though the man had not expected anyone to be in the cave.

The storm continued and the Indian stayed. When they could, they listened to each other breathe. For a while, they felt the heat from each other's body; Jaspere's was from fear, and the Indian's was perhaps from fear but more from cooling down after the heavy

work of reaching the shelter. The lightning still flashed from time to time; it allowed each one to verify the other's presence. No other words. No other sounds but the echoes of distant thunder, the reports of rain pouring through the trees, and the splashes of water dripping into the puddle which had formed at the entrance to the cave.

This kind of fear was new to Jaspere who had no idea where Arnould was or how long the older man had been gone. The young trapper sat stiffly against the wall, flinching from time to time at the possibility the *sauvage* might be planning to attack him. He will kill me with his knife, *sans doute*, moi with my rifle by my side, without my knife to stab him back, to stab him first.'

How long this storm lasted and how long the two sat restrained were lost in the effects of fear on the passing of time. When the rain stopped, the sky immediately began to lighten; grey dawn was close. When the dawn came, the Indian, the savage intruder, as Jaspere later referred to him, left the cave. He left slowly so as not to startle his host to any defensive action. He watched. Just as Arnould had done the previous day, the Indian disappeared down into the small valley below the cave.

What happened then, Jaspere could never say.

When Arnould returned to the cave, he found the young trapper in a deep sleep. Arnould chose well. He thought, 'I will let *mon ami* get some sleep; *mon aussi* I will get some sleep.'

—by Richard Rouillard

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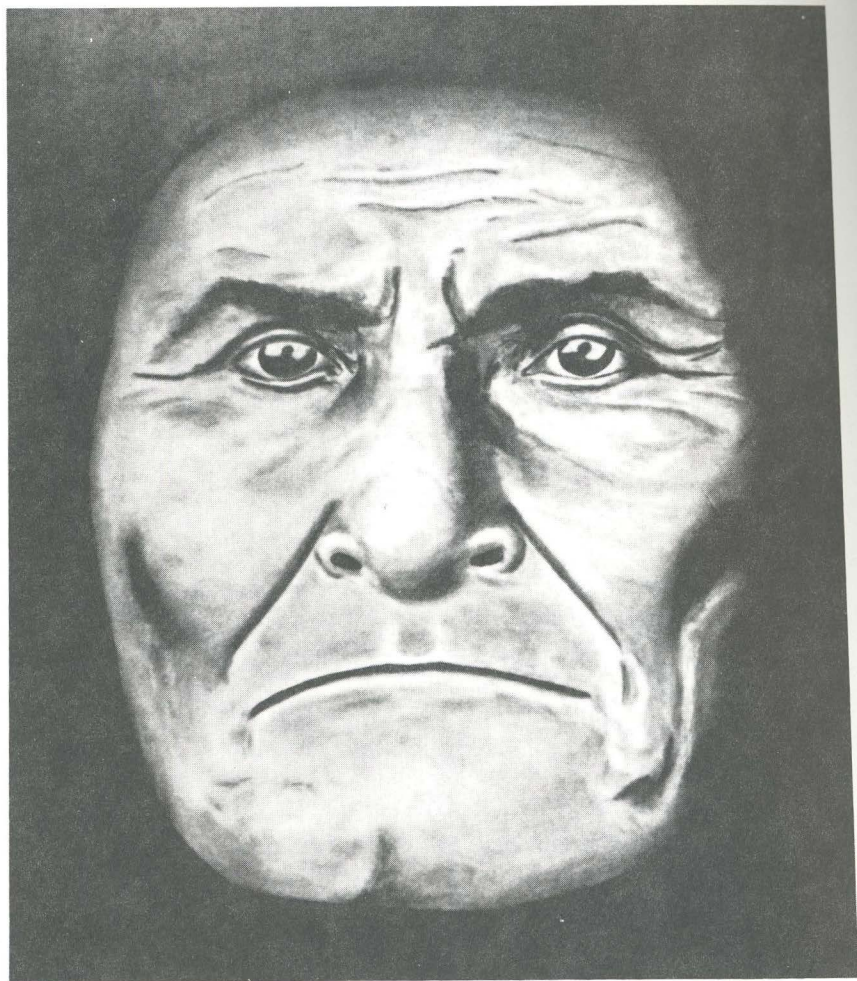
—Ingrid McCarty

A Garden's Colors

The gardener grabbed his pail and walked
to where the short tree stood its garden sweat
green with waiting as a soloist before
the performance begins the gardener
turns the pail and stands and pulls
pruning shears from the tattered blue-striped pocket
that looks like a railroad conductor's overalls the
maestro holds emending hands the crowd
is still their ears glass waiting for the blower
the baton flashes one hundred peacocks
strut through air lost in obsession
his mind closes his eyes
distant weaving sight like the rhythm of
arms flying the colors of the garden
fluid brilliant motion
sounds loud and round and as balanced as perfection
the conductor stops

he places his
shears back into his shorn back coattail pocket
and bows as he gathers the pail
and turns and exits the stage the crowd
surges and explodes in the same sensuous second
as the band plays on

—Lee Gosset



—Jerry W. Liles

Bad Day at Cedar Rock

Marjorie sat placidly at the kitchen table, hands folded on top of the beige desk phone in front of her, staring blankly at the dirty breakfast dishes, letting the silence wash over her in heavy waves. In her mind, she was attempting to arrange the sequence of her actions to follow. Should she first load the dishwasher, then call the police, then soak her blood-splattered clothes in Biz, or should she soak the clothes first? After all, the stains would set if she weren't careful. And she wasn't sure yet what she would tell the police. The compressor on the refrigerator kicked in, the sound jolting her like an electric shock. She rose slowly and began rinsing concrete oatmeal from plastic bowls.

* * *

The day had started at a much higher pitch, which was normal for a family of six on a weekday morning.

"CREEP!" Her oldest daughter's voice pierced the air and eardrums up to eight miles away. "MOM! He did it again! This is disgusting!" She continued a teenaged tirade while her three-year-old brother, nicknamed "The Creep" by his sisters, smiled impishly and stood in a puddle on the floor.

"Just get the mop, Angela," Marjorie called. She was met with a hail of protests, slammed doors and crashing kitchen utensils as Angela drug the mop from beside the refrigerator.

"By the way," Angela sneered as only a 15-year-old between boyfriends can sneer, "the baby is making a real mess and I'M NOT CLEANING THAT TOO!"

Marjorie leaped the unfolded laundry on the living room floor, and jumped the baby gate into the kitchen. Sarah had pulled the grape jelly from the table and was enjoying smearing purple blobs across the floor, in her hair and anywhere else in reach.

"Who let her in here?" Marjorie screamed. She was met with a chorus of "Not Me."

"Angela, Carrie! Are you ready yet? You've got five minutes to get in that car. I'm not writing another excuse this week. You

can just take detention this time." Marjorie unceremoniously stuck the baby under the faucet and scrubbed jelly from her hair. Sarah sputtered, then screamed.

"Don't get hateful with me, shorty. I'm bigger than you are." She grabbed the cleanest dishtowel within reach and dried her youngest and headed for the car.

"Grab the Creeper and come on; you're late!"

"Does he have to go? He stinks," Carrie called back.

"Angela, is he still wet?" Marjorie's calm was controlled and deliberate.

"I don't remember being told to change him."

"Get in the car...Creeper, you can sit next to Angela."

"MOOOOTHER!"

* * *

Marjorie sat stuck in traffic outside Carrie's elementary school with Sarah fussing for her morning bottle which was home in the microwave and Geoffrey Charles (aka The Creep) in the back seat, passing gas and laughing hysterically. She took a deep breath and tried repeating, "It's only a movie..." but it was useless. The "I can't take it anymore" feelings started rising in unison with the temperature gauge on the Mercury.

"WILL YOU STOP THAT!" Marjorie screamed across the backseat at the Creep about the time the car died. 'Oh, great,' she thought. 'These women are as crazy as I am and I'm blocking the driveway.' "STOP THAT LAUGHING!"

Baby Sarah gave up fussing and started to cry. The barracudas behind her began to honk, as if the sound of their horns would magically lower the temperature of her radiator. Marjorie jumped out and opened her hood. Steam blasted her face. "This isn't happening...it just isn't happening."

The barracudas were yelling out their windows now, Sarah was at full pitch, and the Creep thought the whole incident was hilarious.

Marjorie fought the urge to scream.

The tow truck deposited the Mercury on the street in front of the house, and Marjorie shuffled Sarah and the Creep (still soggy around the bottom and smelling like dead fish) out of the cab. She deposited the last of the money Mark had given her last night to buy a baseball bat with into the driver's hand.

"Thank you, I really appreciate it," she mumbled.

"Anytime, Toots. Hey, here's my card. Call me sometime when you want a good time, but get rid of the brat first; he stinks." The driver was Marjorie's vision of what the devil would look like incarnate, only greasier. She smiled and took the card, careful not to touch the hand which offered it.

"I'll remember that," she muttered through lips held tight to keep from spitting in his face.

She ushered the kids in the door, locked both locks and pulled the chain in place. She grabbed Sarah's bottle from the microwave before tackling the chore of getting Creep clean.

"If you mess your pants one more time, young man, I'll sell you to gypsies!" It was an empty threat, but Marjorie wondered for a second where she could find a band of gypsies and how much they'd charge to take the Creep off her hands. She had always wanted a son, but she hadn't realized that they aren't fit for civilized company until they're 30...if you're lucky.

She had just about finished with Geoffrey when the phone rang. "Stay here," she ordered him, knowing it was a futile waste of words, and ran for the kitchen. Sarah was in the hall, just pulling the last book from the bookcase. She had bitten the end off her bottle, and Mark's copy of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was soaked.

"Great!" she muttered as she grabbed the phone.

"Hi, honey, how's it going." Nobody could sound that cheerful on such a day. It wasn't fair. Life wasn't fair.

"What do you want?" she snapped. Pause on the other end.

"Bad day?"

"What gave you that idea?" Sarcasm dripped like the grease from the tow truck driver's face.

"Right...I guess you haven't got to the mall for my bat yet, have

you?"

"No."

"Well, if you can get to it...."

"Fine."

"Call me if you need anything."

"Got a gun?"

"Right...Bye now."

Click.

* * *

'Thank God for Grandmothers,' Marjorie thought as she wheeled the little ones three blocks to Mark's parents' house.

"Sorry about the imposition, but Mark has to have that blasted bat by practice tonight or he's in trouble." Her husband had volunteered to coach Carrie's little league T-ball team months ago and still didn't have all the equipment he needed.

"Don't worry about it," Laura smiled. "Just leave the kids and pick them up when you're through. We'll have a good time."

"Thanks," Marjorie called over her shoulder while she grabbed her mother-in-law's keys and headed out the door. She was free. Maybe the rest of the day would work out better. It couldn't get much worse.

* * *

"It can't be over the limit; there has to be a mistake." Marjorie tried to explain calmly to the prepubescent salesclerk that her credit card was acceptable.

"Sorry, lady, computers don't lie. It says 'No Go' on your card."

'I hate idiots,' Marjorie stewed to herself. 'Why does God put so damned many idiots on the face of the earth and why do they always work cash registers?'

"Will you take a check?"

"Got a driver's license and a major credit card?"

"You've got the card in your hand and here's my license."

"Sorry, your license is expired."

"What..."

"I can't take a check with an expired license."

"It's my license, my picture, my social security number, my address...It's just two days over the limit. Why can't you take it?" Her reserve was slipping, her voice was louder, and people were looking her way with amusement.

"Policy."

"I want the manager, and I want the manager NOW!"

"I am the manager, and I can't take a check with an expired license."

"Then maybe your competitors will." Marjorie slammed the aluminum baseball bat onto the counter with a bang, grabbed her license, credit card, and stormed out of the store.

"You got some kind of mental problem, lady," the clerk yelled after her.

'One more smart remark and you're dead meat, sucker.'

Marjorie headed for the other end of the mall. Had she been a cartoon character, steam would have been pouring from her ears. She stomped past the automatic teller machine, then stopped, got angrier...this time at herself...and pulled out her bank card. She paid cash for the bat.

* * *

Her mood hadn't lifted much by the time she got to the car. She still had about an hour before the kids needed to be picked up at school. She would leave the babies at Grandma's and take a nap. She was reaching in her purse for the keys when a heavy hand shoved her against the car and cold metal jabbed into the side of her face.

"Shut up and maybe I won't kill you, bitch." The voice was cold, like its owner had studied Freddie Kruger in school. Time stopped. Marjorie wasn't sure if what happened next was real, or a nightmare. She didn't get scared; it was like she just snapped inside. She twirled around and caught the guy in the side of the head with Mark's new bat. His head cracked like a homerun ball and he fell, the gun flying across the lot, under a red Dodge mini-

van. Marjorie just kept on hitting him, yelling something about it not being the right day to pick on her. When he stopped twitching, she stripped the plastic bag inside out off the bat, got in Grandma's car, and drove home.

* * *

The dishwasher was humming as Marjorie finished washing her clothes. The bag for the bat had been torched and the ashes run through the disposal. She was sure she had thought of everything but she made a mental list anyway. Car washed, shoes washed, bag burned, clothes clean, bat clean.

She took a deep breath and called the police.

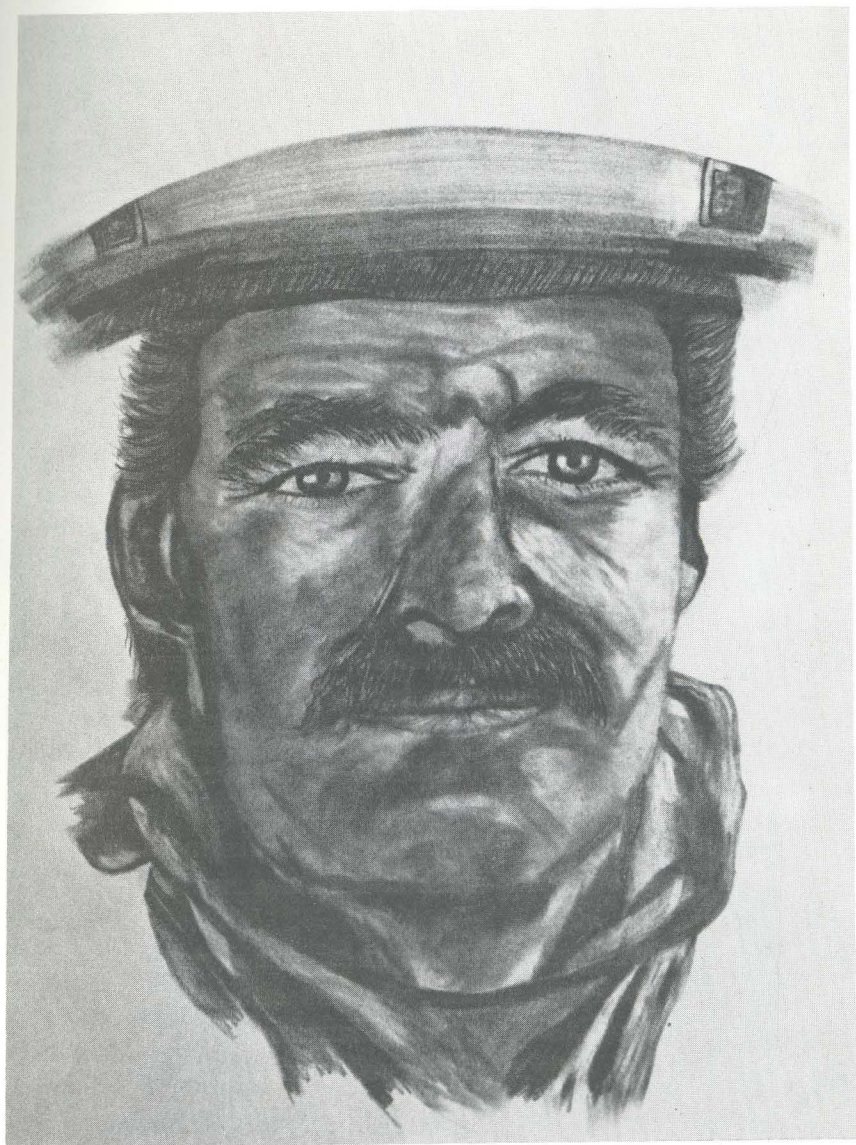
* * *

Marjorie cuddled close to Mark as the 10 o'clock news began. The kids were asleep and it was their time together.

"An amazing development in the case of a young man bludgeoned to death at a local shopping mall," the anchor was saying. "Police officials say an unidentified woman called late this afternoon and apologized for the murder, claiming the man had tried to abduct her and she fought him off. Meanwhile, police are investigating the possibility that the killing of 23-year-old Doug Burgess may have been drug-related. The victim, who was discovered dead in the parking lot of Cedar Rock Shopping Mall, is said to have a long record of drug-related arrests."

Marjorie snuggled closer to Mark and kissed him on the cheek.

—D. Shell



—Cheryl Sharp

Funny, isn't it?

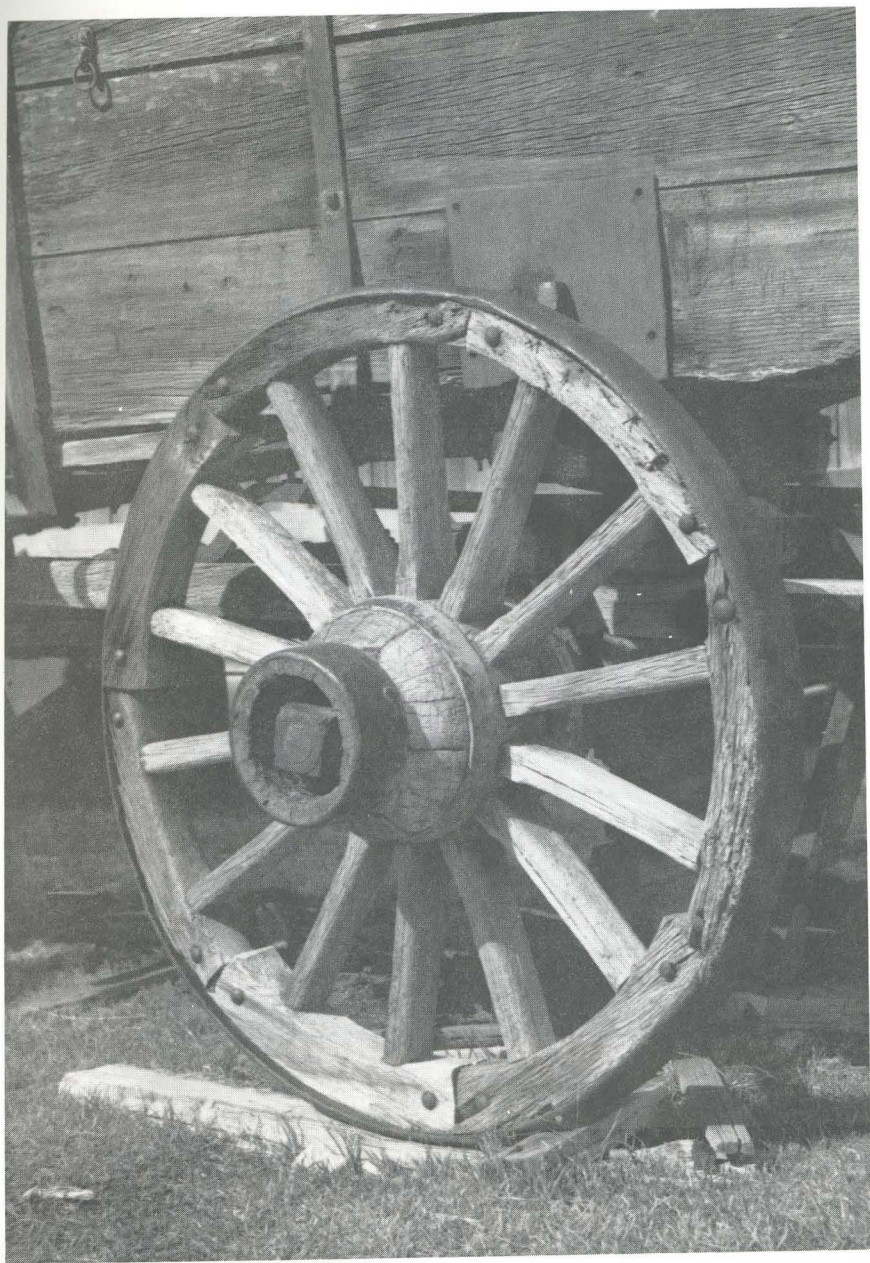
Funny, isn't it?
After almost 10 years
We remain drifting
In a state of suspended animation.

We cannot go back.
Yet, the past remains,
A monument to our mistakes,
Our pain, our young love.

Nor can we move forward.
The obstacles and barriers
Have not changed.
We have grown older, but are we wiser?

I wonder.
Will we ever change enough
To learn from our pasts
And grow toward our futures,
Leaving behind us this never-never land?

—K. Klopfenstein



—Artie Hicks

Will I see You Again?

What is your name mine is ...

Pleased to meet you, I'm fine.

Where are you from? If you don't mind,
I'd like to talk to you. What is your sign?

I live around the corner in a brick house.

Won't you come over, I'll show you around.

I live by myself, where do you stay?

I'm not trying to be nosey. Stop me if I
cross the line.

Are you married or do you have someone?

What do you like to do on the weekend?

What a coincidence, I do too.

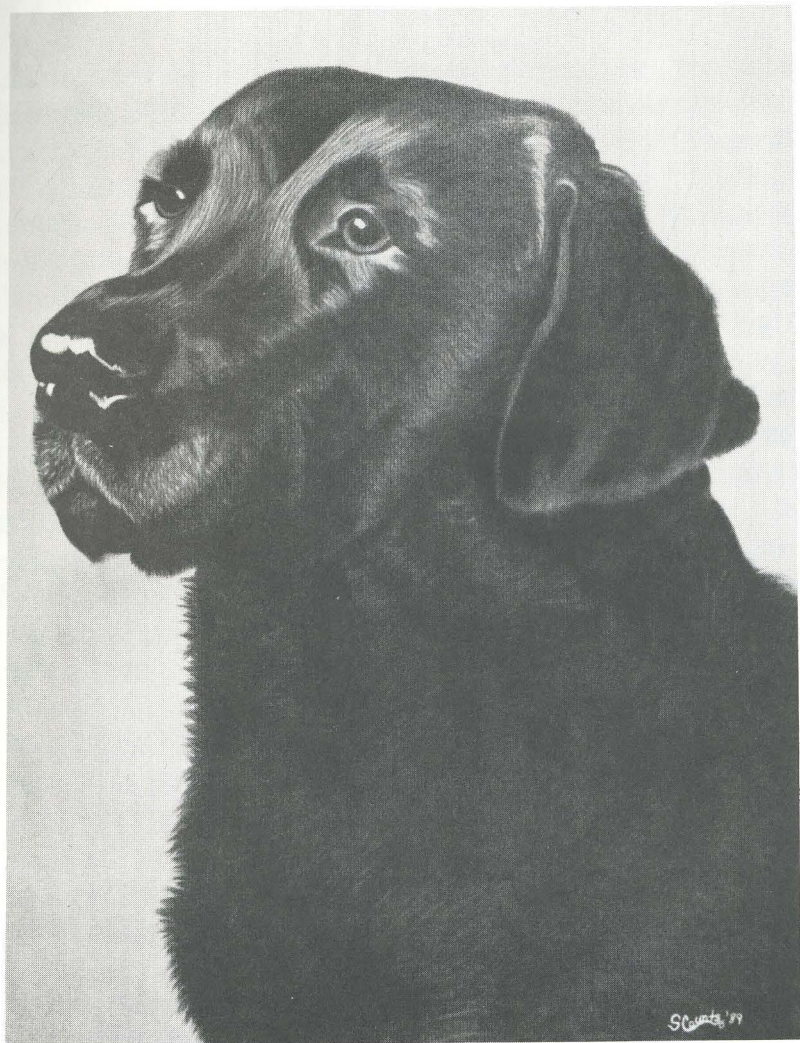
Why don't we get together sometime.

I'd like to show you around the town;

Or stop by sometime when you get lonely.

I'm easy to get along with and I promise
I won't bite.

It was nice meeting you. Hope to see you again.
Won't I?



—Sharon Counts

The Ultimate

She was everything he ever dreamed of — svelte, sleek, pure luxury. He could be sliding downhill in Monaco in this baby. She could run with the best of them.

Ed Johnson waited thirteen years to buy a luxury car, and he didn't buy her off the showroom floor. He special-ordered her. Soft, dove-gray interior, gray and charcoal paint job; she was a masterpiece of understated authority and superb taste. He had salivated over last year's model, but his car was 10 cm longer, 5 cm wider, and her wheel base had been stretched to 135 cm. She had every luxury money could buy.

"Man, what a car," he exclaimed in sheer ecstasy.

His ear was attuned to her every sound: her purr, the forward thrust, the velvet-nosed stop. Swinging to the left hand lane, he touched the turn indicator. Something lurched in the pit of his stomach. What was wrong? The turn indicator didn't light up. There was no click. It wasn't working.

"What the hell — how could that have happened? Damn! I'll have to take it into the shop," he muttered.

Ed glanced at his watch. 8 A M, still early. Plenty of time for me to swing by the dealership garage to have it adjusted, he thought. The sun was shining, and buds were bursting out of the trees.

Heck, I'm lucky she's still in warranty. All I have to do is pop in there and tell them about it. They'll have her fixed in a jiffy. I won't be more than a few minutes late for work.

"Sure thing, Mr. Johnson. We can have her out for you in about twenty minutes. Here's my card. I'm Bob Bolt, Service Manager." He pumped Ed's hand vigorously.

"I'd appreciate it, Bob. Been driving her all week, and this was the first thing to show up. Watch the grease, would you, please."

"You just have a seat in the waitin' room — TV, coffee, anything you want. The girl will page you when it's ready, Mr. Johnson."

Ed sat down, but as he reached for a magazine, a high-heeled blonde with a low décolletage asked him to come into the office. He followed her and sat in the seat she assigned him.

"Just a formality, Mr. Johnson. Fill in this form and be sure to print."

Ed surveyed the doe eyes, full lips, plunging neckline, and took the clipboard with a docile nod. After filling in his name, address and social security number, he began to feel a surge of resentment.

"Wait a minute. You don't need all this stuff: my bank, credit references, my neighbors — all this history. I paid cash for my car, and I have the warranty papers in my glove compartment. Don't you people keep any records?" He was beginning to steam.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Mr. Johnson. Ed — may I call you Ed? I'm Lana, Ed — " she said, patting his hand. "I know it seems like a lot of red tape, Ed. But we need this for our records. They have your other file in the dealership office. It will just take you a minute, Ed." Her big smile was melting him. " — somethin' to do while you're waitin'."

Ed glanced at his watch. It was 8:20. He smiled at the girl.

"Whatever you say — Lana," said Ed, letting his tongue linger suggestively on her name.

When he finished the form, he placed the clipboard on her desk and returned to the waiting room. He hated waiting. An irritating talk-show was on TV, the magazines were dog-eared, and the coffee was rancid. He paced. What is taking so long? It's past 9 o'clock. I'm late!

He passed Lana's desk, and stepping into the garage, he saw the Service Manager.

"Bob," he called loudly, "what's holding up my car?"

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Johnson. Should be ready any minute now. If you'll step back inside, I'll check on it. Our insurance people insist we keep our customers out of danger, you understand." He spoke rapidly, nudging Ed back inside.

Ed Johnson waited. He waited ten more minutes before he burst into Lana's office.

"Miss — er — a — Lana, would you call Bob Bolt in here? He promised to let me know what the holdup is."

"Of course, Mr. Johnson — PAGING BOB BOLT TO THE FRONT OFFICE — PAGING BOB BOLT TO THE FRONT OFFICE." She smiled at him sweetly. "Have a seat, Mr. Johnson."

Ed sat. When his minute hand neared 10 o'clock, he jumped to his feet and exploded.

"I gotta get out of here. I have to go to work. Where is your Service Manager?"

"Well, Mr. Johnson, I'm sure he — Oh, here he is now."

A smile covered Bob Bolt's face as he approached Ed with a clipboard.

"Mr. Johnson. You're the one with the transmission problem. The boys are checking that valve assembly now. We should be on top of the problem in a few minutes. Just have a seat..."

"TRANSMISSION! What do you mean, transmission? There's nothing wrong with my transmission. If you let some bimbo mess up the transmission on my new car — I'll sue! And you better believe, it, buddy." Ed had Bolt by the lapels of his white work coat. "Turn signal — have you got that? It's the turn signal!" He didn't feel like letting go, but he did.

"Of course, it's the turn signal! I know that. Uh — one of the boys dropped the wrong work order on your board. I'll tell the head mechanic, right away, Mr. Johnson — right away." Bolt was out the door and away.

Ed felt the heat leaving his ears as he strode into the waiting room.

"Transmission," he muttered aloud. "That transmission is as smooth as glass. And it better stay that way."

He adjusted his hair and tie and sat down unhappily. Some lady was watching a soap opera. He stared at the TV screen, but he wasn't seeing anything. He was just sitting there — seething.

It was 10:25 when Lana came into the room. Anything was a relief. He watched her walk toward him.

"Mr. Johnson, I'm having trouble with one of the credit references you gave me," she murmured distractedly.

Ed felt his lip tighten. "You don't need any credit references. I paid cash — cold cash for my car. I don't need a loan — I don't want a loan. What's the matter with you people?"

"That's fine, Ed. So long as you tell me how you expect to pay for the work you are having done today. Oh, excuse me, Ed. My phone is ringing — I'll be right back."

10:35 Ed wondered where his joy had gone. All week, he'd been riding on Cloud 9. Driving the car to his office had been a dream come true. Now this. Ed slumped in his seat and watched as Lana rounded the corner.

"Ed, if you'll give me a credit card, I'll have your bill all made out and ready for you."

Ed was on his feet.

"You don't need my credit card. My car is one week old. It's paid for. It's under warranty — and I want to see the manager."

"Bob's gone out for coffee, Ed. Did you want to talk to the head mechanic?" Lana asked softly.

"No, I don't want to talk to the head mechanic! I WANT MY CAR! Where are the damned keys to my car? I want 'em — NOW," he shouted, chasing Lana to her desk.

"I can't release your keys until your bill is paid, Mr. Johnson. That's the rule for everyone."

"WHERE'S MY CAR?" Ed bellowed as he rushed about from one end of the garage to the other.

"What's your name, sir?" asked a mechanic with clipboard in hand.

"JOHNSON," Ed shouted, "Ed Johnson. And where the hell is my car?"

"Oh, sure — Johnson. Well, Mr. Johnson, we just got the engine out. See it up there on the block and tackle? The boys had to send out for a part, but it shouldn't be too long."

Ed Johnson walked to his car. He looked under the hood where his gentle, purring engine had been. He stared into the air. There it was, his thirteen-year-old dream, torn asunder, hanging aloft like some insidious criminal. He pulled open the door on the driver's side and stared inside. A hideous gash of black grease was trailed across the gray upholstery.

Ed felt something snap. It was 10:45 when Ed picked up a large sledge hammer from the body shop. With a bloodcurdling shout, he slammed it down on the long hood of his car. Again and again, he slammed her. With a final shout, he gave the sledge a sling — right through his windshield.

As the police led him to the squad car, Ed saw Bob Bolt returning

from his coffee break, and he heard Lana say, "I don't know what happened to him. He seemed like such a nice man."

—Anita Hanson

You Tell Me

You tell me that it is safer to keep your distance.

Remain an island, build walls around yourself

No pain can penetrate.

If you don't open up, you can't get hurt.

But tell me, don't you feel pain

In such a self-imposed isolation?

Does it not hurt to have those who care

Turn away in defeat because they can't

Break through your lines of defense?

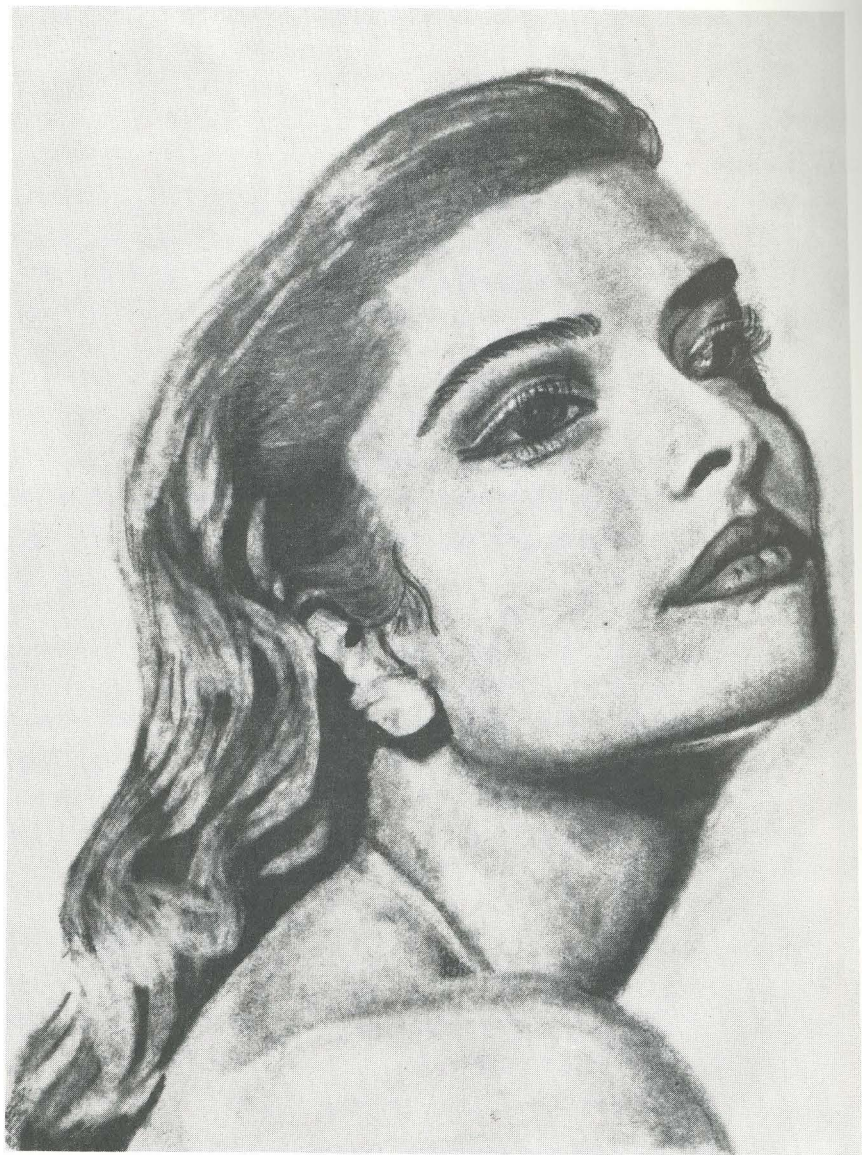
I will gladly help you tear down those walls

And build a bridge back to a world

Of more than disappointment and pain —

A world filled with love.

—K. Klopfenstein



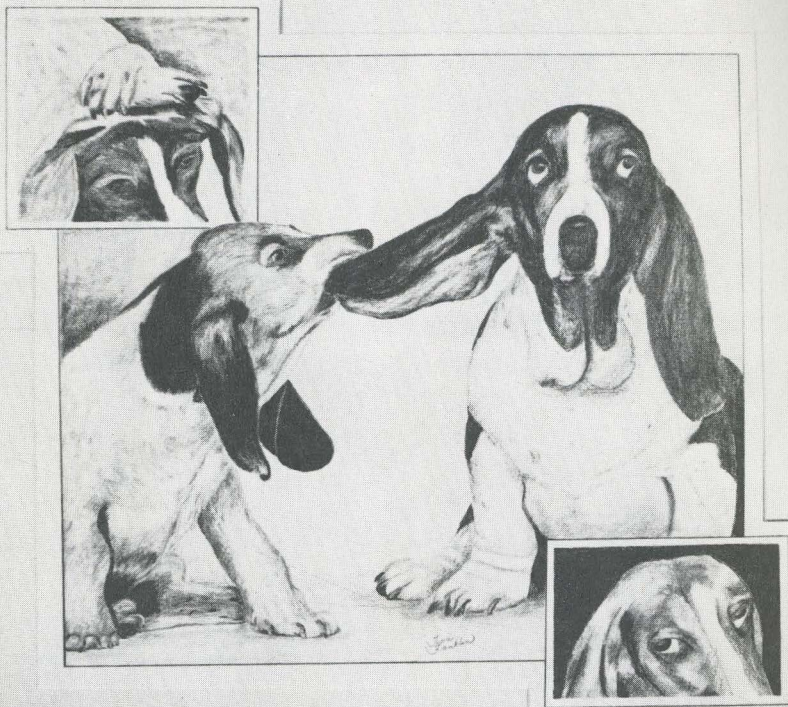
—Patricia Frullo

Suddenly you appear

Suddenly you appear,
A specter from my past,
With explanations
That soothe my pain
And give me hope.

But it is only an illusion.
You remain distant —
An elusive ghost
Who haunts my heart.
How I wish I could
Reach out and touch you
And find that you are real.

—K. Klopfenstein



—Tena Franklin