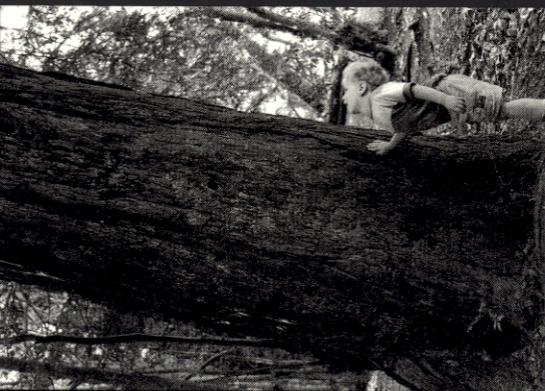


TOTEM 2002





"HUMBOLDT COAST REDWOODS" by JUDY POST 35 millimeter

Memoriam-A Duet  
for Steve Craver September 26, 2001

swing low sweet  
swing low sweet  
oh sweet chariot  
oh sweet  
sweet chariot  
coming back to carry  
swing low, sweet chariot  
coming back to carry me home  
God, he'll never see another clear night sky.

could the sky be any clearer  
try not to sleep, the car ride (world) will be  
more real  
will God's morning come  
oh sweet chariot  
John says to eat cheddar gold  
fish if we get hungry  
bitter death taste  
the stars' reflection on the desert's face  
he said he'd only be a minute  
upstairs  
elfish frame hovering in the air  
Steve, frozen glistening (happy)  
in my mind

*Liddy's Junkie*

I flash her that smile, the one that's not much to look at, but radiates confidence. And I can feel her get infected by it, then the world starts to blur as the high kicks in. The high that can only come from having some else interested, someone new in your sights....

Getting things going is a hard thing to do, I've never figured out how to set it off and go pro. Yet I've managed to make myself a comfortable amateur's living, grabbing chance when she walks by. Opportunity doesn't sneak up on me anymore; it crashes into me like a wall. A wall that breaks up into a warm wave, its heat, numbing my brain, making everything slow down. Everything except my mouth, that somehow manages to speed up, faster than my brain can turn it off. When her own smile breaks through, the flame heats up and at that moment I let go of all the guilt. Who cares if I don't believe what I'm saying. Who cares if Liddy is waiting for me, waiting for me to take her out, waiting to celebrate our anniversary, again.

What matters is that I've got a fix going here and I need to finish her off. I never promised this girl anything. I never told her that I was a good guy. Its not my fault she needs to believe it so bad, so bad that she turned off her own mind. It doesn't turn on again until later that night, when I am on top of her and say Liddy's name. I can feel her recoil, and freeze up, but its too late and I am starting to come down. I can see her eyes start to catch on fire and I brace myself for the storm that's about to break. The body aches begin, cursing through me, emanating from that torn open wound inside of me. And yet... somehow she manages to catch herself before saying anything. Probably cause she realizes she never really asked the right questions, she knew the answers and just didn't want to hear them said out loud. How could she not, all the signs were there and she blew them off, its not my fault, and besides we both know we'll never see each other again so what's the point, right? I know I didn't do anything wrong, I never promised her anything, even if she thinks I did, I never said the words. As we both get dressed I can see all the cobwebs start to leave her. I can see reality slam into her little world and its not pretty, but that's okay cause neither am I.

So now that the fix has run dry and I need Liddy to help me come down. I show up at her place at three am, all it takes is one knock on the door. She's been waiting up for me, and so it starts again, our clockwork routine. She asks me where I've been and I lie. I tell her I fell asleep; we both know it's a horrible lie, my worst yet. But it doesn't matter, I stopped putting thoughts into my lies a long time ago, back when Liddy got tired and stopped testing them. Now its just part of our old, twisted, beautiful dynamic. She can smell the other girl all over my body and liquor on my clothes. Still, she lets me, cause like I said it doesn't matter. Liddy and I have grown beyond the truth at this point in our relationship. Even at this time of night I am still her best high. We've spent five years of our lives living like this. Our friends stopped trying to "fix" us a while ago. Now they just silently judge us from above on high. They can't understand Liddy and me... they can't afford to. If we can be happy like this their worlds are the ones that get warped and don't make sense. Well, five years of stability as far as I am concerned. They can all fade away as far as I am concerned. My mother told me something once, she said, "the next time you're main lining don't forget to have some quaaludes handy cause they really take the edge of the fall" ... she has no idea how much I listen to her.

Liddy and I got married last summer.



"SNOWY EGRET" by JUDY POST 35 millimeter

"SUNSET AT LAKE TAHOE" by RYAN SAMSON 35 millimeter



*Visiting (at her grave)*

I have brought for you  
a smile, and a pine cone  
- two small emblems  
of each year I have missed you  
oh I love you I love you  
my lovely, I love you  
one of these years  
with nothing left to bring  
I will sink into your soil  
cuddle in close  
and leave for another  
the cluttered fatigue  
of love and remembrance.

"Dear,"

All night I hear the hush and tickle of this rain,  
Its surf and surge. Your whisper.

For on this tiny path winding so far from my home,  
The soft breeze in your touch weaves  
Through the last of the harvest bend and turn  
In the whirlwinds of your dress.

I

And with the break and birth of day,  
The grass and leaves perspire and steam -  
The specks of light on shrubs blink  
And hesitate - the sky in the far, untouched.  
  
The blunder and vacuum of clouds  
Fades. The wind in the bushes sways -  
And in the crescendo of silence emerges a beam,  
A tender notion to faith.

IV

The streetlights throw my shadow -  
Oh how the malaria is so savage  
A disease to sweat out bright, dark,  
Bright shivering!

The indecision of this race as horizon turns to sky,  
These pleasant paths now a slow turn to mountain.  
And my fever a drudgery trudging  
Up, up this hill.

II

I wish I had known you, for now  
Twenty freckles of light spot the sheers,  
And in this most violent of revelles, (1)  
The dawn in my room throws soft sunlight.

A train sounds one mile away, its hum a dirge to  
A sun-beater infinitely tired and sad,  
Up to this humility peak, the animal within so  
malicious -

I sigh.

And, with the hush promise of your lips

Still a whimper away

(Two-thousand memories pass before the screen) -  
I throw open the heavy theater curtains  
To a stage cold and sober with morning  
With your dream-signs.

The sun is pale. Its sleepy eye

just blinking beyond the hill. My knees  
Are old and creak, the weak noisy machine.  
It is cold to run.

III

But now I feel my feet are lighter.  
The chill now makes my lungs grow tighter.  
And spring, sprint, sprawl: I am a finch!  
And no Lesser bird (2) could so believe

This soft heaven to be found in the connaissance (3)  
That within this being of dust and soot  
There is a wondrous urge to breathe, to once again

I, muse, cannot think of this beautiful joke,  
My laughter a mere cough, soft.  
Once more, your idea has whispered me away -  
Your sober gaze distant and my ankles weak.

1 - Reveilles (reh-VAY-uh, French) - Dreams

2 - Lesser Bird of Paradise - a type of tropical bird, the males are highly  
for their bright and colorful plumes.

3 - Connaissance (ko-NAY-sonce, French) - Knowledge

"A LONG NIGHT AHEAD" by EMILIO CASTAÑO GRAFF 35 millimeter



"EMILIO'S STANCE" by BEVERLY KARLSON acrylic on canvas

*Rain in Pasadena*

The rain is drumming heavily and monotonously on the hood of my red raincoat. My feet are drumming as monotonously and not any less heavily on the pavement. I am running through Pasadena's street on this winter weekday morning to get my head clear of the strange night from which I had been, but awoken just minutes ago by the same rain drumming against my window, heavily and monotonously. Not from the very same rain drops of course, but from the same fancy of the weather.

I've had a pretty rough night fighting dragons and stuff, so I was really exhausted when the rain woke me up. All the eyes-rubbing and head-shaking did no help, I still felt the dragons pounce on me. I decided to take a run to get my head clear, despite the rain. Or because? So, here I am now, splashing through the puddles of Pasadena's sidewalks that have turned into streams and creeks following the same boring rectangular road pattern that dominates the map of every American city. The palm leaves are hanging in the rain like abandoned party decoration. You know, palm trees in a rain storm look ridiculous in a way. It just doesn't fit - palms and rain. Palm trees stand for sunny beaches in travel catalogs. Rain stands for suing the travel agency.

There is a dream catcher hanging on the wall, just in the middle over the head end of my bed. Of course, it has to hang over the head - how else could it catch the dreams? As, of course, the dreams are always going into our heads. Coming out of our heads? Whichever, mine is still throbbing like hell. This dream catcher is patiently watching me when I sleep and takes care of my dreams. It must have had a busy time last night, it probably got overloaded. Maybe I should get it exchanged.

I keep on running, automatically like a clockwork. Passing cars wave at me with their wipers. I wave back, but neither the cars nor the people hiding behind their windscreens seem to notice. They are too busy following their daily routine, slightly disturbed by the rain that is drumming heavily and monotonously on the hoods of both my red raincoat and their cars. I stop waving. I am not a lunatic after all, I think. My legs have become cold and numb. They keep running on their own. I don't have to worry about them. Let them have their fun, I'll have mine. Did I mention that my raincoat is bright red? I like my red raincoat. Red is such a wonderful color on a grey day. And finally, you would only wear a raincoat on a gray day anyway, wouldn't you? So, giving a raincoat a bright red color is the ingenious foresight of raincoat creators who put themselves into the place of raincoat-wearers being rained on.

The world pretty rapidly becomes foggy, which fills me with some concern. I find myself relieved when taking off my glasses turns the world from foggy to blurry. It is quite astonishing how a little deed like taking off one's glasses can change such a big world. Well, for me the world is what I see, of course. So, the world is blurry now. But that's much better than foggy. Of what use is a sharp world to me when I can't see it for the fog?

My head feels dizzy from all the parts of my sub-consciousness that I had to go through during the night, the dragons only being one of these evanescent appearances, albeit one of the more lasting sort - if this is a term that can be applied to dreams at all. Dreams are so unfaithful; they come and go as they please and don't care about you and your desire to hold and analyze them. Perhaps I should write out my dream catcher over a large pile of white paper, letter size. Or over my computer keyboard? Or over a video tape? I'll have to think about this, but now, I'm still too sleep drunk.

The rain becomes stronger. I splash into an ankle-deep puddle that I have seen too late and soak my sneakers and socks. Well, maybe there is something to a sharp world after all....

I come to a traffic light that is raincoat red. Obediently I press the button the sign on top of which tells me to. The cars are still waving at me, only this time threateningly, because I have stopped them in their mad run with the tip of my finger. I feel power surging through my body. Instead of crossing the road, I wait until the traffic light becomes raincoat red again, and the cars start standing by howling engines. Somewhat my finger moves towards the button, and finally dares to push it again. Only seconds later the cars are stopping and waving at me furiously. Leaning against the lamppost, I am just grinning back and stay at my side of the street. The next time, my finger is already more confident of its power and pushes the button strongly all the way through. Seventeen cycles later, I begin to worry about my finger becoming too power-hungry and about the rush hour people behind the windshields becoming too annoyed at the weirdo in his red raincoat leaning against the lamppost holding up rush hour traffic in its heavy and monotonous run. I cross the street by only jumping on the yellow stripes of the zebra pattern. You never know what could happen to you if you hit one of the black gaps. Would you want to risk it? Having reached the other side, I can just convince my finger not to stay on and practice button-pushing also from this side of the street.

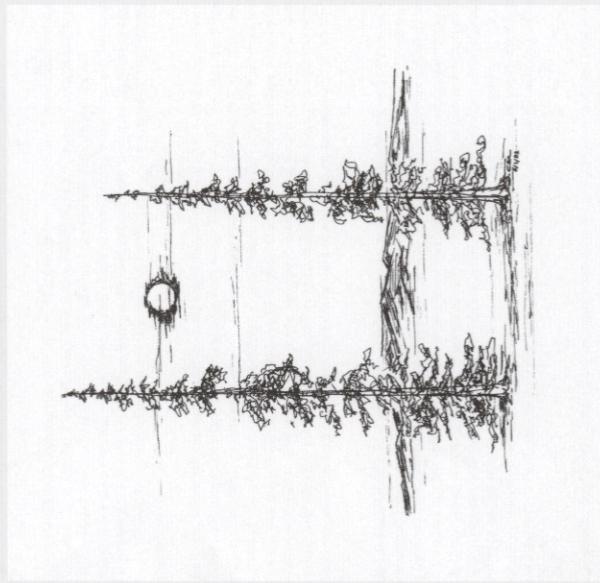
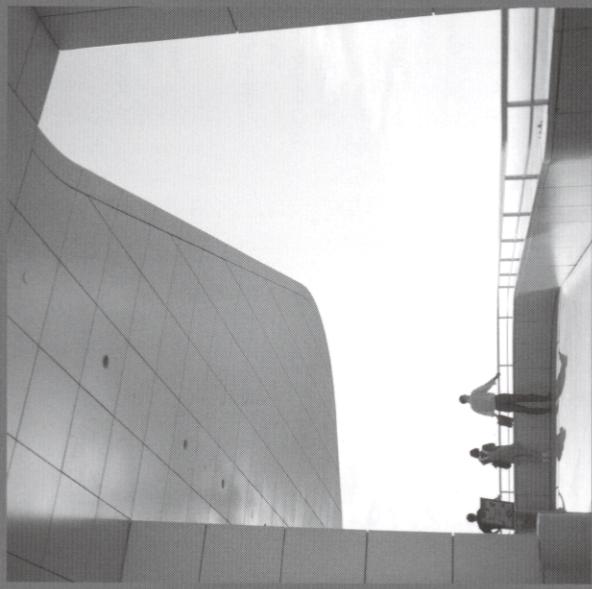
A little cold from the standing and making faces to car drivers I am spinning home. For the last couple of hundred meters I take off the hood - I want to feel the rain. Back in my warm apartment, I tear off the steaming clothes and my soaked sneakers and socks. I hang my red raincoat next to the window - the contrast with the gray sky is marvelous.

Entering the bathroom stark naked, a guy with dripping hair smiles at me from the mirror. I draw the shower curtain and let rain drops drum heavily and monotonously on my head. I love when it rains in Pasadena.

*Two Ponds*

Twin ponds sparkle with fallen stardust,  
Reflections of a gentle soul beneath calm waters.  
Cautious shadows echo upon their depths,  
Ponderous revelations told by voiceless whispers,  
Buoyed only by the moon's unconcerned smile.  
Divine conversation between heaven and earth  
Blows ripples across the cerulean nightscape.  
A dove kisses trembling willow branches.  
Earth turns away from god's gentle caress.

"REFLECTIONS" by EMILIO CASTAÑO GRAFF 6x6 centimeter



by CHUCK YEE pen on paper

*Black Cans, Beer, and Cigarettes*

Loosened up by Lucky Lager  
or by Pabst Blue Ribbon beer,  
he'd not deny me my Black Cow  
on fourth-grade Friday nights  
at the chrome-rimmed kitchen table,  
where he sits in undershirt  
and workpants, while he's  
smoking, drinking, nodding;

counting on that quart of beer  
to help him to forget  
the day, the weeks,  
the months, the years.

Soon he'd grin and move about  
the kitchen slowly gathering  
ice cream, root beer, spoons,  
and glasses for us both.

I would watch his Pall Mall ashes  
growing long at table's edge,  
and when the warm grey softness fell,  
with cupped hands I'd try to catch

its shape before it hit linoleum  
and turned from ash to dust. It's then  
I'd rub it in my corduroys,  
like dad without an ashtray near.

Next, I'd slide the burning butt  
to get it back out on the edge  
where ash could start to build again,  
or he'd just light another one.

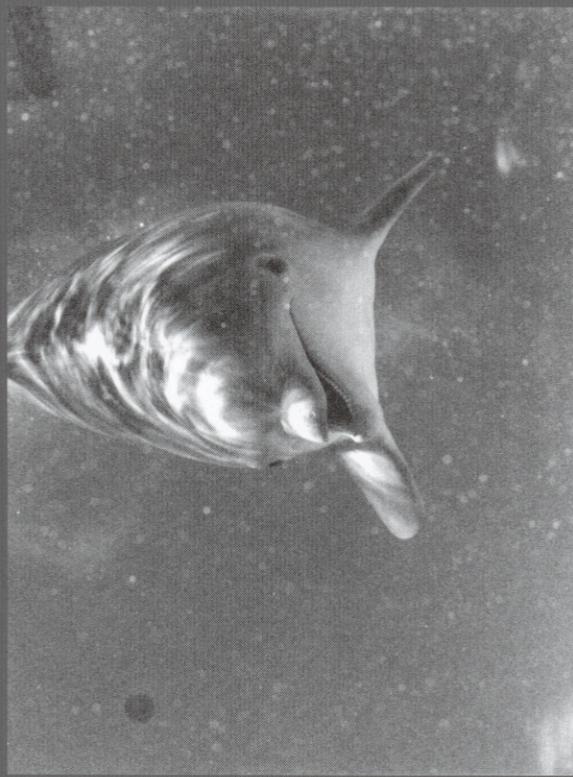
Simple favors for each other,  
catching ash/creating Cows,  
went on between my dad and me  
for more than thirty years, I know.

Saying little, touching less,  
until an hour before he died.

*Innocuousness*

"Hi.  
How are you?  
I'm fine," I lied  
Presenting the public face  
The public wants to see  
Knowing there's a truth  
That's deep.  
Sad,  
And serious;  
A side too burdensome  
For public conveyance,  
Too problematic  
For casual contact  
So I smile, and I lie  
Knowing perfectly well  
That you're lying too.

“SLOVENIAN STREAM” by FREDERICK ROMBERG 1024x768 pixels  
by VIJAYANTHI BALARAMAN 35 millimeter



*the unemployment sonnet*

O! What misfortune o'er the head may fall  
Of he who most the labourer's life hate  
Of he who deaf'd his ear to labour's call  
Of he who in such calamitous state

Can buy nor shoe for foot nor hat for pate?

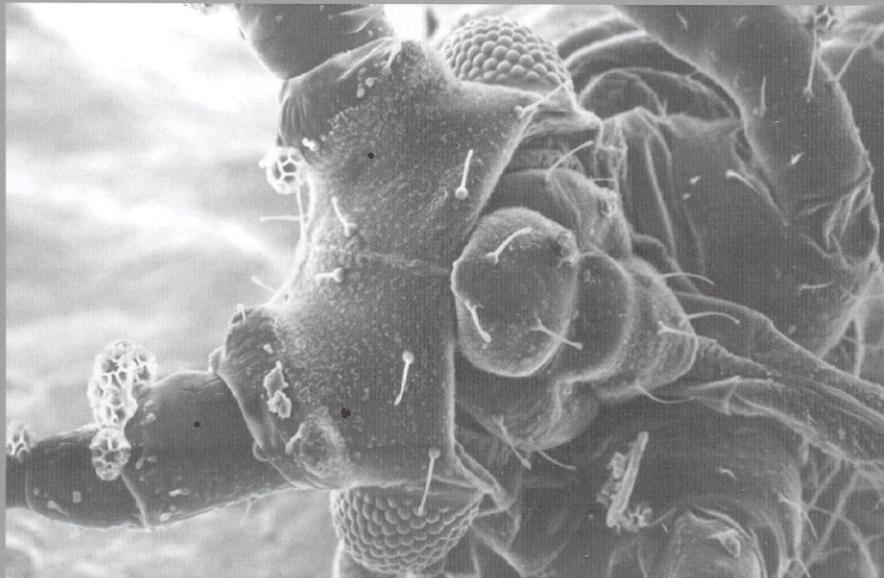
What wants the man who for all wanting goes  
But that which he finds furnished by fair Fate  
But that which from the fertile earth up-grows

Or that which from her arteries out-flows?  
O, painful life of living on the cheap  
Whose poverty and peace he freely chose  
Your treasures transcendent he now can reap!

To live a little while as lazy slob  
Seems far more meet than yet another job.



"THE MARTIANS HAVE LANDED." by JEAN-PAUL REVEL scanning electron microscope



"ROCKPAPERSCISSORS" by MICHELLE GIROLI light on photo paper

*Mexico*

I'd say come away to ocean or  
to land—the small arm  
reaching south and west—  
her thin legs crossed beneath her  
bended near her side, a body thick  
hard, sweatless, dark skinned  
Judith (Julia) waiting in a desert dusk  
silent air entering her nostrils  
flow out the long shaft, her rifle  
points, lips pulled across  
“Conquistador,” it mocks.

“CHURCH ALLEY” by KAMILIEH CHRISTENSON 4x5 inch



"CANE GARDEN BAY" by FREDERICK ROMBERG 1024x768 pixels



by MICHELLE GIRON 35 millimeter

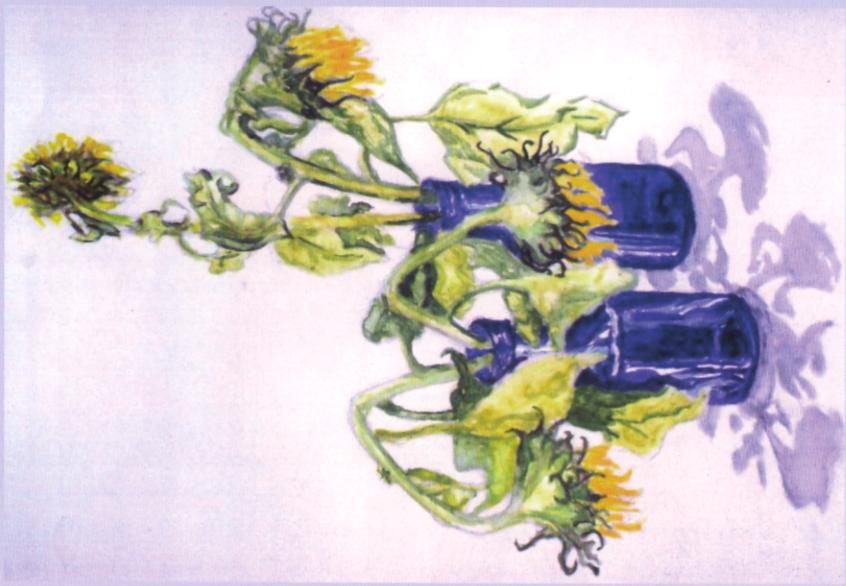


"Glasgow"

Through spotted, sullied window glass  
Through fleeting boxcar after car  
Immersed in stony faded sun  
Weatherworn telephone poles  
All peeling, limp, forgotten  
Ever more content to rotting  
  
Trodden fences, feeble boundaries  
Hills' horizon close around  
Windless hang the grasses now  
Stillness, only, rounds the bales  
No greater cause than seeing  
Little needed there but being  
  
This passing screams an aberration--  
The steel beneath has settled home  
The streaking shadow even so  
And yet the inner world defies  
Defined in isolation  
Neglecting outer desolation  
  
50 miles an hour Montana  
Stubble fields and foothills spread  
So many blips between boxcars  
Now another lonely station  
Shut in once again we pass  
Still silent under spotted glass

Eating Grapes

"Glasgow"  
Oh, to enjoy life,  
as ~~feeling~~ and bittersweet as it is.  
It's like popping an insignificant moment into the mouth,  
and letting it roll around,  
colliding with the canines and the molars;  
Feeling the ~~accuse~~ peel on the tongue,  
smooth and abrasive at the same time;  
Appreciating its bland perfect wholeness,  
and then to **finally** squeeze  
just a bit,  
and feeling the sudden release;  
Breaking through that fragile barrier  
and reaching the **pungent** succulent flesh,  
which bleeds the musty, tangy ~~sweat~~ of the pulp;  
Slowly sucking and chewing,  
savoring the *acid* sweetness,  
ever savoring,  
until finally the pulp is all but **DISSOLVED**;  
And the moment passes down the throat,  
to be followed by another tiny moment,  
a moment that is similar,  
but never the same,  
not exactly the same.  
Every moment is *relished*,  
the tart pleasure echoing through ~~life~~,  
to be called on when needed  
from the *tubs* of memories;  
Although few are remembered distinctly,  
these individual, **negligible** moments make up an eternity,  
And this is to enjoy life.



by JORDAN MILLER watercolor

"LIGHT AND DARK" by NICHOLAS A. NGUYEN 1280x960 pixels

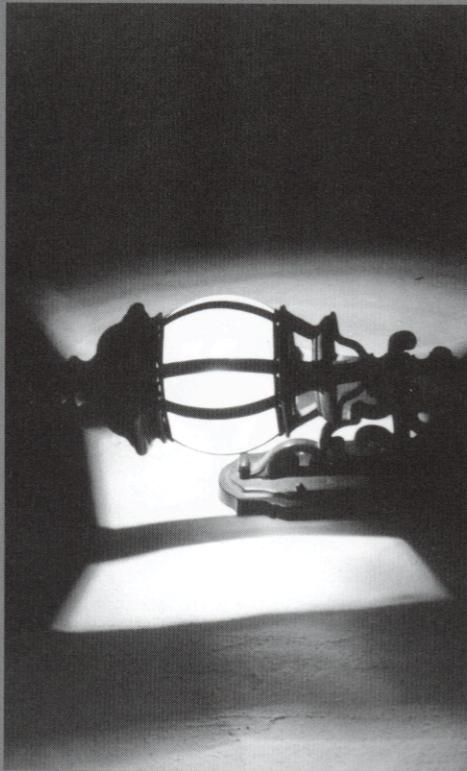


*Achytas of the Moon*

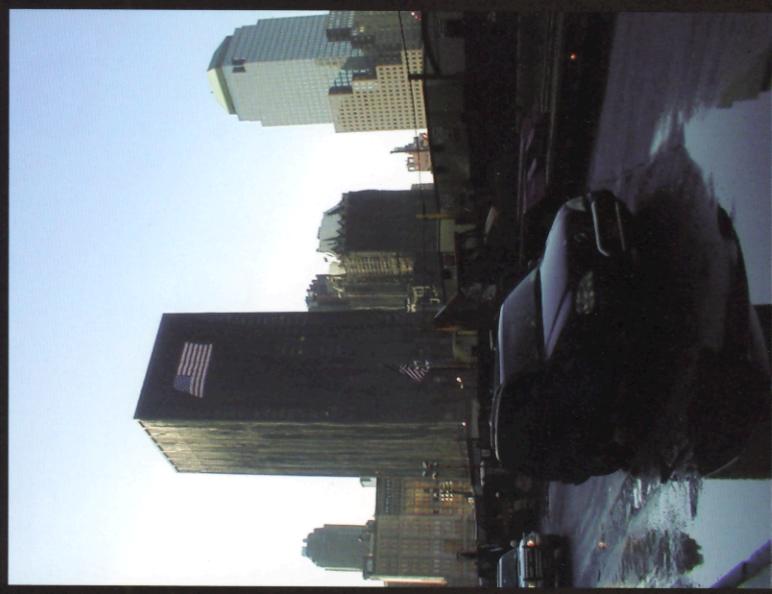
We were children that sat through the night  
As the wind wove its hands through our hair,  
And we feasted our eyes on the light  
Of the flowers that bloomed in the air.  
  
There were fireflies casting their light  
On the flowers that bloomed in the air  
As they drifted around in the sky  
Through the warmth of the month of July

Do you long for those innocent days  
When we laughed at the passing of years?  
We are trapped at the ends of a maze  
By the shimmering depth of our tears.  
  
I would cross to your end of this maze  
And undo the progression of years,  
But the distance between you and me  
Has been drowned by the sapphire sea.

So let's meet on the stairway to hell  
Where we feast side by side on the moon.  
Then our summers are quenched by the well  
Of the creamy white light of the moon,  
And our winters are warmed by the well  
Of the buttery light of the moon,  
Which is salty and bitter, but sweet  
Like the ocean that lies at our feet.



"SHROUD OVER LOWER MANHATTAN" by NICHOLAS A. KNOUF 1280x960 pixels



In America, every day is a new beginning, every sunset is merely the latest milestone on a voyage that never ends.  
For this is the land that has never become, but is always in the act of becoming.

Ronald Reagan

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