

# FRANK

MAGAZINE

8



Photograph by Mark Farbin, from "Numbered Women" series.



Handwritten text: Koel Bay

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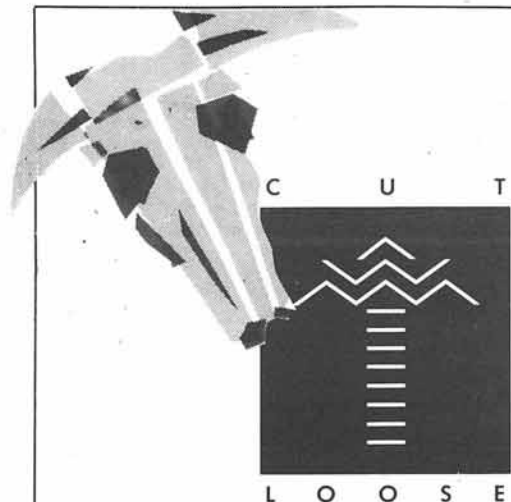
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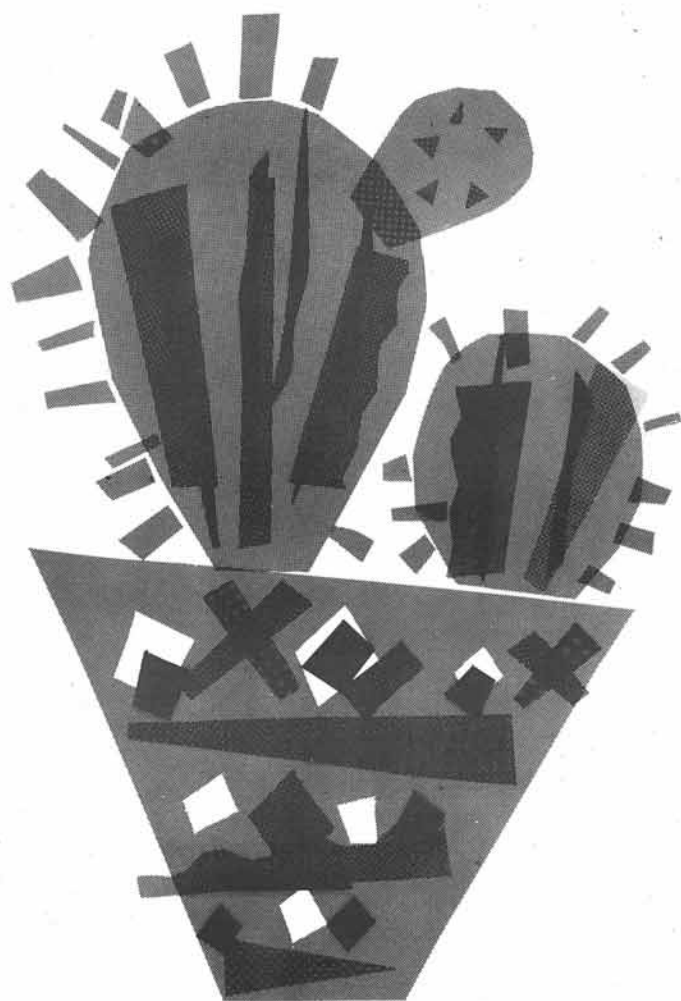




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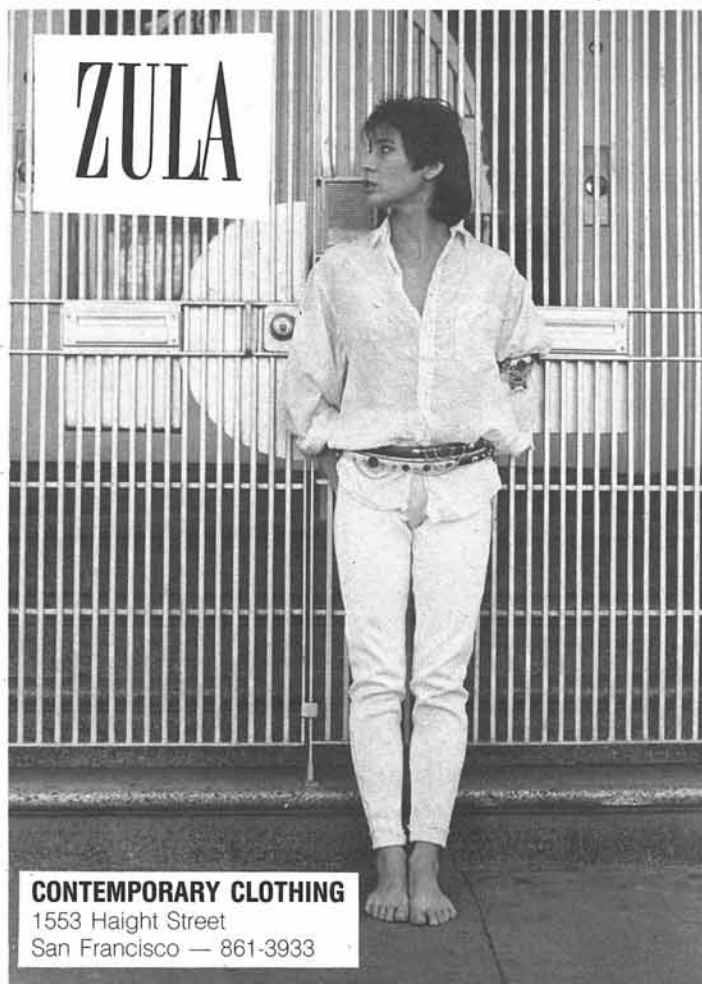
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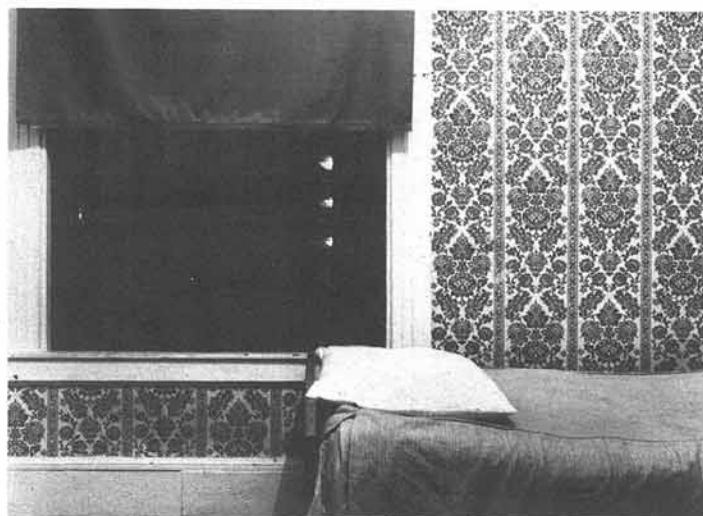
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FRANK 8



Photographs by Brian Krollick

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# FRANK CORRESPONDENCE

**Dear FRANK,**

Residencias Las Lagrimas is the only house in Risaralda advertising rooms to rent. A traveler on the road to Putumayo would hardly notice the sign above the door because the handpainted lettering is so badly weathered and the board is warped. Still, the sign is one of the few things that in any way distinguishes the house from the others in its block — they all have a cheerless look of decay, or most anywhere in the Colombian highlands, or most anywhere in the Andes, you know how appearances are at the times when the sun is hidden behind gray clouds and rain is imminent: then the houses seem like melancholy widows withdrawn into a world of remembrances. Las Lagrimas, perhaps because its windows are shuttered and its door is closed, at the moment seems more woeful than the block, all con-

necting and all awry. The threshold of the first is a foot lower than the next; the house in the middle looks squashed and gasping for air; the house on one end looks as though it were rudely shoved to the side. If they weren't so pathetic, they might look comical. All of the houses are made of adobe brick plastered and painted with a thin, white, water-base paint. The paint is streaked, as of someone crying. You would suppose that's how Las Lagrimas, "The Tears," acquired its name.

Each house has a gabled roof set with Spanish tiles, but most of the tiles are broken and their redness is blotched by a blackish-green moss that reminds you of mold. On the crest of each house stands a small crucifix, no doubt piously placed there by the owner. Only Las Lagrimas is an exception: on its roof, in place of a crucifix, stands a rusted and broken weather vane.

All in all, in its shabbiness and neglect, Residencias Las Lagrimas presents an unwelcome front. No children are playing on its doorstep. No one enters and no one leaves. In all its sullen aspect, it appears deserted.

But it is not. Inside, there is an old man. If you enter through the front door, after brushing away the cobwebs and adjusting your eyes to the darkness inside, you will see him, soundly sleeping at a small table. His head is resting upon his arms so that you see a profile of his face. It is a pale and dusty face. Indeed, like the room and its corners — like all the counters, display cases, grocer's shelves and benches — the old man himself seems composed of dust. It is as though he had gently settled into his chair, long ago, bit

by bit, as light as sifted powder. One breath and he would fly apart. Perhaps, were death to overtake him now, you would simply sweep him into a corner and brush off the table to remove his final remains. Yet, there is nothing extraordinary about him sitting in his chair, napping. He is like any other Colombian highlander, used to silence, holding in his home from the endless ravages of wind, cold, rain and harsh government.

Behind him, in a tin frame nailed to the wall, is a photograph. It is a portrait of a man and his son. The man, draped in a poncho, carries his head proudly; his heavy jaw is set firmly. He has a full face with wrinkles. His hair is black, carefully trimmed and receding. His eyes are cold and heavy. He is a stocky man, slightly bowlegged, wearing heavy work pants tucked into the tops of rubber boots. There is a strength and sturdiness in his bearing, as of a man toughened by hard labor. The younger man lacks the weathered toughness of his father, but he has the same angular, but he is taller by a foot or more. He has a slender neck, a strong chin and shining, succulent lips. His hair is long and shiny. appears to be in the prime of youth and in his eyes there is a glowing defiance.

You feel in looking at this portrait that the subjects posed only reluctantly — that each is uncomfortable in the close presence of the other. But this is the impression of a moment. All sensations are intensely heightened in this sullen room with the rattling of the door you hear outside and the whisper of the wind came through. The odor of the room is a subtle perfume of dust and urine, old liquor and bodily decay. Dust covers all the surfaces of the counter and the shelves, the table, benches and floor. You touch a notebook and its cover crumbles beneath your fingers, its paper disintegrates into flakes.

The old man continues his slumber. There is nothing more to see. You return to the street. A cold wind comes sweeping along and passes down the rows of houses. It cries in the eaves. A bleak, blue-gray sky hangs threateningly over the town, as though it were about to collapse and smother the populace. Against the sky, the solitary weather vane of Las Lagrimas stands out a lonely silhouette.

Sincerely,  
**Mark Mardon**

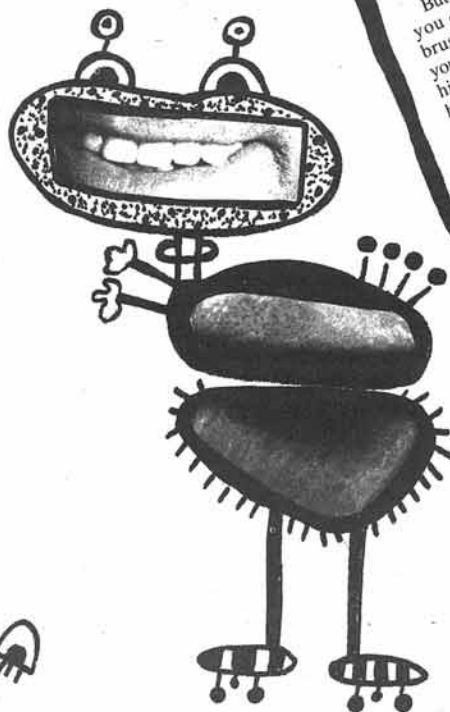
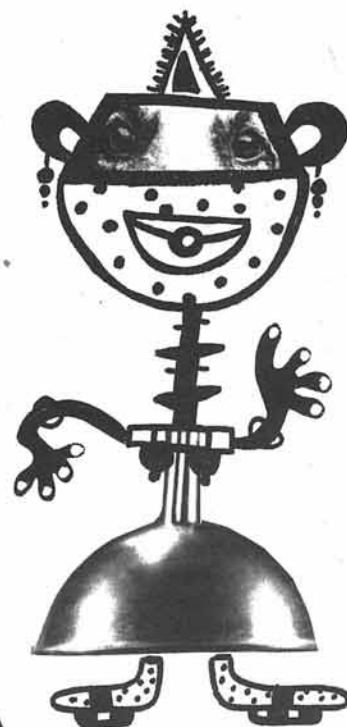
**From Florida**

**Dear FRANK,**

Bye Bye Brazil Boo Hoo Hooray!

"There ya go Babe," the waitress just said as she set a plate of pancakes in front of me. It's so good to be "home," familiar ground. I can understand again! I can eavesdrop again. How I love to hear bits and pieces of other people's conversations. Americans can say the darndest things. "Like a hot knife through butter," I heard a man describe how quickly he was reading through a book.

S





## Dear FRANK,

It's early morning in Pagosa Springs, Colorado — the most god-forsaken ugly town I've seen since I was last in Rock Springs, Wyoming. The air is a cold choking brew of sulphuric steam, coal smoke, diesel exhaust and the ubiquitous black dust that collects on everything in sight. The steam rises from the hot springs on the edge of town, redolent of very old egg. These springs are meant to be one of the attractions that might slow the passing tourist and cause a few of his dollars to adhere to the coffers of the impoverished community. The diesel exhaust boils out of the hundreds of semis that roar through on their way to Wolf Creek Pass — one of the arteries that links what lies east of the Continental Divide with what lies west. They pass signs for 5 miles, reading "5 Miles to Jan's Cafe" and "4 Miles to Jan's Cafe" and so on until they pass a sign that says "You have PASSED Jan's Cafe." Whether this fills the drivers with remorse and guilt or causes them to speed up a little, I don't know. I have eaten at Jan's Cafe, and would go to great lengths to avoid doing so again.

The marquee on the movie theatre reads "Last Chance to See Rocky IV." The last time I was in town it read "Last Chance to see Rambo." Next door, in a low-slung brick building, is the window of the Upper Room Christian Shop, painted with red and green holly and a white cake with candles where "Happy Birthday Jesus" is written in letters of gold. On the other side of the theatre is Goodman's Supply Store, where you can buy long red flannel underwear and fluorescent orange Elmer Fudd caps. Outside, Officer Hooley pushes his belted khaki pants down a little, to accommodate the swell of one of Jan's pancake breakfasts in his already protruding belly. He will spend the rest of the day lurking behind the Town Hall in his patrol car, pointing his radar gun at anything that moves.

On another street, the Lynch Funeral Home and the Wild Rose Bakery lean against one another like old drunks. Long leprous strips of yellow paint peel off Lynch's, where the curtains are pulled and sign on the door says "Closed." The sign on the bakery says "Come On In!" and three grim looking cowboys emerge, holding immense sugar rolls and paper cups of black coffee. They screw up their eyes in the wan sunlight and sip at their coffee. A bowlegged, three-headed personification of a hangover, one of the heads spits on the ground and the other two gaze narrowly at his effort.

There are more churches in this town, per capita, than any other town in America. On the outskirts of town, an elderly Japanese woman has opened a pie shop in a brand new dove grey Victorian building, set back from

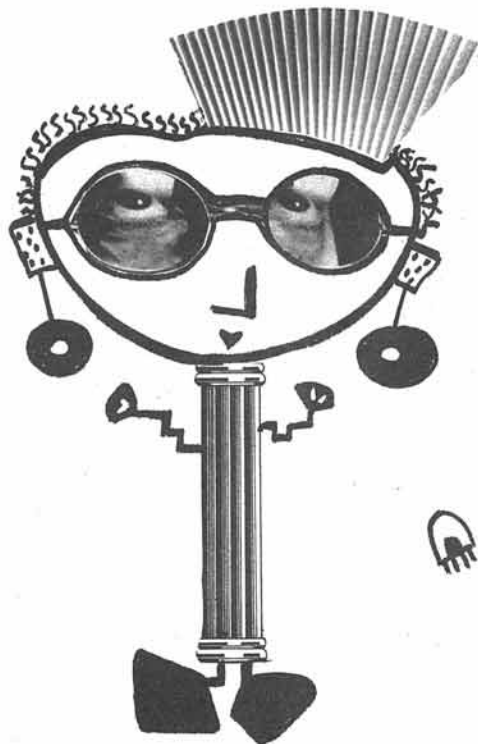
the highway by a sea of mud. There are no signs on the road or on the building, but the parking lot is always full of immense pick-up trucks, and her tiny wrought-iron chairs are always full of immense muddy men with varying expressions of anticipation or satisfaction. These are pies that can make you feel loved. These are heart-breaking pies.

The elderly Japanese woman (surely the only Oriental person in all of Archuleta County) has this to say as she hands over my crumb-apple pie, fresh from the oven. "Bible say good Christian should be kind to widow and orphan. I poor widow, so good Christian of Pagosa Spring be kind to me. So, I make pie and open pie shop."

Around the town stand some of the most beautiful peaks in Colorado. The sun touches them with the softest rose, and somewhere in the incessant static on the radio, George Jones sings "Whatcha you goin' to do when your Superman flies away?" having a wonderful time. Wish you were here.

love,  
Alix

P.S. My cowgirl friend Evelyn's lying cheating ex-husband began writing her notes telling her how much he loved her, so she got in her car and drove it through the side of his house into the living room and over his television set.



## Dear FRANK,

Commuter trains provide for passenger unity. It's part of the fare. I enter and sit. Watch the windows. Industrial yards with puddles and pallets. Cement wall with graffiti that states THE WALL. Electric wires are a network of revelations. We share this view passing beyond glass. A roomful of strangers traveling the same direction at similar speeds.

A man enters our car. He carries a textbook and an oversized alarm clock that hangs by a short chain. With long white hair, a beard and black plastic glasses taped at the bridge, he looks like your basic Father Time. He walks up the aisle, shouting, "We're all in this together, you know. We're co-travellers through the same portions of space and time."

No one looks up from the morning paper. We stare at the same pages that thousands of eyes peruse on trains like ours. But we do not read.

"It's true, you know. And what's more, these are bite-size portions, just like in that bowl of cereal you had this morning. And when this train comes up to the mouth of tunnel —"

"Please turn off your radio," someone says.

"Listen, lady. This is not a radio. This is me talking."

"Get a job."

"I already have a job," he says. He walks up to the teenager that said the famous phrase and repeats himself.

"I already have a job."

The train brakes and he loses his balance. The clock drops. He is on all fours looking for the pieces. The book has landed by my feet. I kick it open, see that it's mathematics. I read on, begin to identify with the characters.

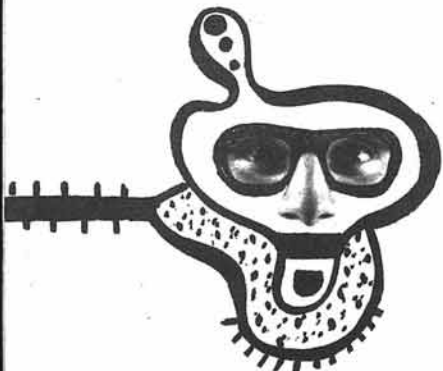
By now, I have slipped into my side of the equation. I am reducing the ride to its lowest terms. Stations are terminus points. They divide the lines into segments. Banked curves counter centrifugal force. Figures are standing, sitting, even sleeping in unison. Their bodies accelerate at the same rate, reach peak velocity together. Women eyes man. Man eyes woman. But parallel lines will never meet on a track like this.

Living by the rails,  
C. Ess

## FRANK,

I disagree with Steve Parr. The best art should be decoration. To enhance — glorify the lives of the wealthiest people. Perhaps to give the rest of us goals to aspire to.

Anon





# Stoney Burke: Stand-Up Agitator

by Steve Cassal

**T**he crowd has formed a circle and is standing three and four-deep on the sidewalk of Dwinelle Plaza at U.C. Berkeley. Inside the circle, a grey-haired, balding man with glasses is flailing his arms wildly and talking a mile a minute. "Must be another one of those crazies," mutters a passer-by, obviously new to the area.

Most people around here would know better. Especially when the throng holds together for hours, spends most of its time laughing, and doesn't leave before dropping a "contribution" in an old battered hat. Those signs could mean only one thing — that the man in the center must be Stoney Burke, Berkeley's number one street comedian, gadfly and apostle of civil disobedience.

More than anything else, Stoney is a stand-up comic. But few comics can stand up for so long. On this afternoon, Stoney performs non-stop for three hours. Anybody else would have to be peeled from the sidewalk. But Stoney, who goes through his routine in a rambling, free-associational style, actually seems to be *gaining* strength toward the end.

His brain is a comedy factory that never ceases production. Much of what he does is improvised on the spot. While he's talking, a young man walks by carrying a flower. "Don't kill me and then bring me to her!" Stoney quickly shouts, taking up the point-of-view of the flower. From there he launches into a rap about the peculiar ways love is expressed in our society. This crowd chuckles and nods in agreement.

The street performer also works with topical humor gleaned from the newspaper headlines of the day. He holds up a dented, slightly charred vegetable steamer and says, "If anyone else finds a piece of the Space Shuttle, I want you to notify me, care of the Stoney Burke Shuttle Reclamation Project." Everyone laughs; the vegetable steamer does look like a piece of the shuttle. On occasion a routine is too funny to discard and becomes part of his "standard repertoire"...like a Ronald Reagan bit in which the befuddled President doesn't realize he's been shot ("Hey, this isn't in the script.")

Anyone in the vicinity can become part of the act. Spotting a blonde, crew-cut man in leather walking by, Stoney yells, "Hey, Nazi." When a woman rides by on a bicycle, the comic screams, "You there! tanned, blonde, back pack... Miss California. What do you have to say for yourself?" Stoney



***"There's just nothing like standing out there slagging it down... I love the freedom of the streets; I can talk about whatever I want to. Hell, this is my vocation... I want to do it till I'm 99 and walking around with a cane."***

seems less concerned with insulting these people than with drawing them into a dialogue he can feed off of. There's no rancor behind his taunts; after a performance he'll chat amiably with the very same individuals he has singled out.

Obscenity is a big part of his act. Working on the streets, he feels obliged to use the language that's found there. And the four-letter words certainly help gain a crowd's attention. But Stoney is capable of making an

audience laugh without them and there are long stretches where he works as cleanly as any comic in the business.

In fact, Stoney's act is remarkably diverse. Sometimes he'll dress up in costumes — an Uncle Sam uniform, a Santa suit or a businessman's three-piece suit. He does imitations and boasts a pliant face that seemingly can assume any expression. There's even something humorous about his body, which actually has an enlarged funny bone. He's spindly, almost spider-like — the better to snare passers-by in his comic web.

The majority of his material is political, but no subject is off-limits — religion, high finance, TV or himself. "I'm full of shit" he'll abruptly say during a routine, or "I don't know what I'm talking about." He's tough on himself as he is on Reagan, Bush, Deukmejian or Feinstein and audiences love him for that. It's also obvious that they respect him for his commitment to his ideals, for his energy, and for the fact that, unlike most comedians, he dares to step down from the lofty stage and be "one" with his audience — on the streets.

His real name is Patrick Evan Seasons. "Stoney Burke" was derived from a 60s TV show in which the hero was a rodeo performer who traveled around, rode the horses and the women in pretty much equal numbers and said "gotta go" a lot. The Berkeley Stoney has kept on the move, too.

Born in Highland Park, Michigan, he was an adoptee. His father, a high school shop teacher, and his mother, a nurse, were Catholic and liberal and were actively involved in the Civil Rights movement. "One time they invited some black kids to our house," says Stoney. "The next day when we woke up 'Nigger' was scrawled outside on the sidewalk." That incident may have brought on the development of his social consciousness, as well as the desire to change the attitudes of others.

Most of his youth was spent in Romeo, Michigan, a town of 3,500 located about 20 miles northwest of Detroit. "I was a real asshole as a kid," he recalls. "I had a big mouth but not much of a body to back it up. My saving grace was that I could always make everybody laugh."

After "deliberately" flunking out of Catholic school at age 16, he began hitchhiking around in nomadic fashion. "I slept under bridges a few times" during this

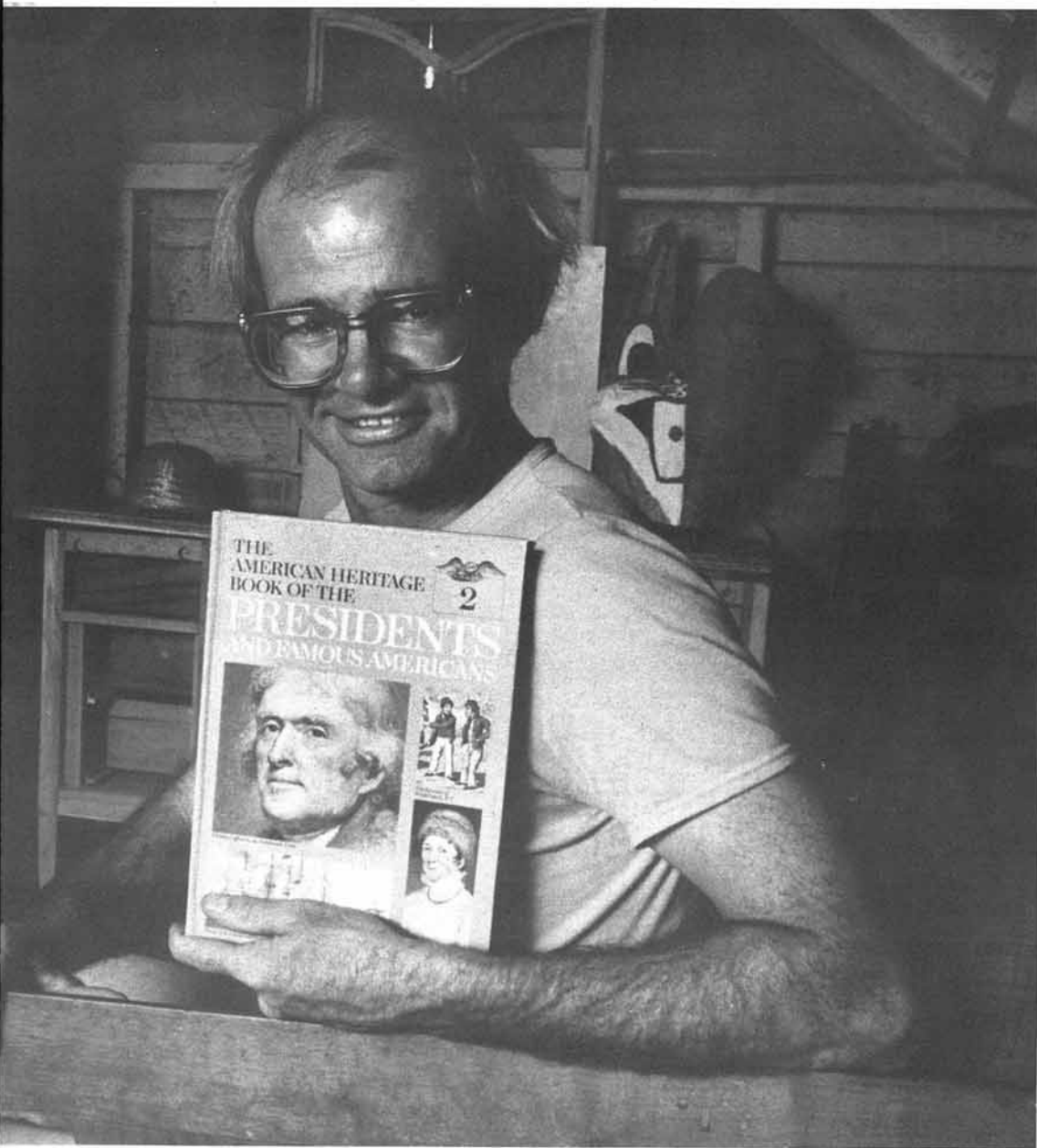
period, he says. Eventually he settled in Eugene, Oregon, where he performed white-face pantomime and took dance and theatre classes. The counterculture in Eugene, which emphasized environmentalism and organic health, was a big influence on him.

He came to the Bay Area to study with renowned mime Leonard Pitt. It's hard to imagine Stoney as a silent entertainer and after a year of working with Pitt, Stoney started "doing the streets" in Berkeley. Although some people think he has been performing at U.C. Berkeley forever, (the grey hair makes him look a lot older than 33) that was only nine years ago.

"There's just nothing like standing out there on a summer afternoon and slagging it down," says Stoney. "I love the freedom of the streets; I can talk about whatever I want to. Hell, this is my vocation... I want to do it till I'm 99 and walking around with a cane."

Curiously, Stoney isn't exactly sure what he does or how he does it. "I've developed a rap where I just keep talking fast without being really conscious of what I'm saying," he reveals. "It's trance-like. I don't even remember a lot of my routines afterwards. I just go. I don't care if I die the next second. I just go."

"My basic rap? Well... it's the decline of



Photographs by  
Steven L. Rosenberg

Western civilization, the destruction of the environment, the development of a post-holocaust consciousness and how we have to get our act together. I give a good rap. I give 100% and spill my guts. That's how it has to be on the street; You've got to put out. The audience won't settle for less. And neither will I."

Stoney lives in an attic room in a collective house on Ashby Avenue near the Claremont Hotel. When he wakes up in the morning, usually around 8:30, the first thing he sees is a cartoon that hangs on the ceiling above his bed. The punch-line of the cartoon is "Get a Job." Also attached to the ceiling is a card from his parents. "Have a Happy Valentine's Day, son... the world's a better place because you live in it." According to the comedian, his parents and he remain close, "although sometimes they wish my act had fewer curse words." That profanity really is just "part of the act"; in private, Stoney curses no more than the average person, perhaps less. In fact, when I visited him at his home he was extraordinarily normal — friendly, polite, even a little shy. Only his "street persona" is weird.

Early in the morning, Stoney spends about an hour with the newspaper, marking promis-

ing articles that can be worked into a routine. "Some of these stories are just *designed* for comedy. Look at this," he says, pointing to a clipping. "Nancy Reagan wants to take the Gorbachevs to Safeway."

After going through the paper, Stoney picks out his costume for the day and heads over to campus. He never eats before a performance. "I hold that out to myself as a sort of reward," he says.

Generally he starts to perform about noon. His show lasts anywhere from one to three hours. Particularly impressive is his talent for asking the crowd leading questions. "Who runs the country?" he asks rhetorically, and everyone strains forward to hear the answer. It's also clear that Stoney's act isn't just funny-business; it's also a call to action. He rails against the government and then shouts, "Wake up! Wake up! Do something! We must defeat them! Nuke the White House! Burn it!"

Stoney draws a crowd that numbers around 200 at its height. If he were a money market manager, that's when he would pass the hat. But Stoney says, "I don't want to be like the market economy, where you pay and then you get it. With me, you get it, then you pay."

As the crowd starts to dwindle, he says:

"You got a nickle or a dime? Put it in. Got some guilt, a pair of Volvo keys? Put them in, too." Lots of people give him money.

"When I first started, I was really revolutionary. I'd say, don't give me any money, I don't want it. I guess I've changed a little on that score," he says. According to Stoney, performing in the streets has "bottomed out" and now he's lucky to pull in \$20 a day.

Following the performance, he grabs some food as his reward and talks about his notion of "success." He seems ambivalent on the subject. "I'm anti-success. I don't want my picture on the cover of *People Magazine*. I try very hard to control my desires for money, fame and the other so-called "good things" in life.

"But there are certain things I'd like — more access to the media, my own studio. And I feel I should be "getting on" with my career. I feel I could be the next great American satirist, and I'm frustrated at times by my lack of progress."

Stoney has tried being a "conventional" club comic. He has performed at the Holy City Zoo, the Punchline, the Other Cafe, and many other Bay Area humor emporiums. But eventually something always seems to go wrong. Many club owners want him to sanitize his language or his politics, which

they fear might offend conservative patrons, but Stoney refuses to work under such restrictions. Nor can he accept the idea of performing neat little sets within a rigidly specified time limit. "I can't do that; it makes me feel like I'm in a comedy concentration camp," he says.

Stoney has led a rougher life than many comics. He says he has been arrested 15 times — though never convicted. Some of the arrests have been on obscenity charges, others for political activity. In 1980 he was arrested for disrupting a Marine Corps recruiting table in Berkeley and under "weapon" on the official report, officers wrote: "mouth, voice."

His scariest run-in with the authorities came during the 1984 Democratic National Convention in San Francisco, which he "crashed" in his Uncle Sam getup. While lecturing the delegates on the evils of corporate wealth, he was seized by a pair of burly secret service agents and whisked over to the psychiatric ward at San Francisco General Hospital for a sanity examination. Unbelievably, he received several months later a \$250 bill from the government for medical services. "That was the *real* test," says Stoney. "If I'd paid that bill, I *really* would have been crazy."

Between confrontations, he has had his share of bright moments. Swedish TV filmed a documentary on him "that made me look like Woody Guthrie." He starred in the movie "Citizen" with Whoopi Goldberg. He has worked with Professor Irwin Corey and Firesign Theatre, and a few months ago teamed with George Coates in the multimedia performance work "RareArea." He continues to secure club dates and recently opened a new act at Club Nine in San Francisco. But he is so different from most comedians that he admits "I still don't know where I fit in."

He is most comfortable in the streets, especially on college campuses. The comic has performed at U.C. Berkeley, San Francisco State, U.C.L.A. and the University of Michigan, to mention only a few. "I've got a job to do at those places," he says. "I've got to win back all those lobotomized idiots who have spent their whole lives watching TV without thinking for themselves."

How long will he continue to do it? "I'm going to keep talking till Reagan dies. Then I'm going to shut up — for about 30 seconds."

# EXOTICA



By Steve Parr



■ Contemporary music is a by-product of fads and technological innovations in a culture obsessed with image and marketability. Most of the music we end up hearing is designed to please us by incorporating elements of original style. We are supposed to feel we are listening to the "the real thing." Most contemporary music is marketed in this way, bowing to the current trends in art, fashion and pop culture. It is no accident that the first million-selling record in the United States was not Beethoven or Bach, but that maestro of classical schlock — Montovanni. ■ Many people in fact like their music adulterated. The Muzak corporation, for example, has for many years produced watered-down music specifically formulated for elevators and supermarkets and to pacify and increase the productivity of white-collar workers. ■ This process, however, occasionally produces writers and composers who, while working in a contemporary style, become innovators in their approach and results. In the 50s and early 60s mood music was the contemporary sound of the day, and it served as a backdrop for middle class fantasies of romance, adventure and sophistication. Utilizing contemporary arrangements of that time and integrating a diverse mixture of musical and ethnic styles (classical, jazz, Polynesian, African, Latin American and pre-electronic sound) many composers were able to produce an oftentimes inventive, bizarre hybrid of pop music. ■ Les Baxter is considered by many to be one of the most prolific and innovative composers of this time. Born in Media, Texas, and educated at the Detroit Conservatory and at Pepperdine College in Los Angeles, Baxter worked with the early Tommy Dorsey and Bob Crosby bands and went on to become a staff conductor at Capitol Records. He was a composer, conductor and arranger for dozens of albums, films and television programs (*The Lassie Show* among others.) His style was contemporary, distinctive and melodic. It incorporated exotic instruments, strings and large choral ensembles to produce a lush, smooth sound. Most of Baxter's albums focused on his fascination with primitive music and he blended these styles into a highly popular easy listening sound. ■ The liner notes to "The Ritual of the Savages," one of Baxter's most popular records, say, "Do the mysteries of native rituals intrigue you...does the haunting beat of savage drums fascinate you? Are you captivated by the forbidden ceremonies of primitive peoples in far-off Africa or the Belgian Congo? 'The Ritual of the Savage' is a tone poem of the sound and struggle of the jungle...the hue and mood of the interior...the texture and tempo of the bustling sea ports and the tropics!" ■ From its cover depicting a formally- clad couple locked in the throes of passion amidst totems in the tropics, to the song titles such as "Sophisticated Savage" and "Stone God," this work is designed to tantalize us with the mystique of the "noble savage," giving us the illusion we are listening to authentic sounds of the jungle with all its magic and mystery. The music was, and still is, a milestone in the easy listening exotic music field. Baxter's other records such as "Ports of Pleasure," "Jungle Jazz," "Jewels From the Sea" and "The Sacred Idol" are all brilliant gems from our pop cultural past. ■ "The Passions," featuring the then unknown female vocalist named Bas Sheva, was certainly Baxter's most ambitious and strikingly original recording. Through the use of his talented composing and conducting skills, along with Sheva's sensuous voice, he creates interpretations of the various passions — lust, terror, ecstasy, despair, jealousy, joy and hate. ■ Other works and instrumental scores Baxter produced include "Tamboo," "Que Mango" and "A Score for Xtabay" — an e.p. by the mesmeric Peruvian singer Yma Sumac, who has an extraordinary five-octave range. Baxter produced many recordings in a wide range of other styles, but his finest works are his interpretations of various exotic themes. ■ Another giant in the easy listening, exotic music field was Martin Denny. His first l.p., released in 1957, was entitled "Exotica" and featured among other things his immensely popular version of Les Baxter's "Quiet Village." The Martin Denny Combo, discovered by millionaire Henry Kaiser when he opened his

famed Hawaiian Village in Waikiki, consisted of a vibraphonist, string bass, bongos and Denny himself on piano. Along with this went an incredible variety of other instruments including bird calls, steel drums, Japanese koto, bamboo sticks and other eclectic instruments designed to create an offbeat, improvisational sound with a luxurious, tropical easy listening feel. ■ Denny's concept for his sound was strikingly simple: "We establish a mood by stressing melodic content and highlight it with novel effects," he once said. Denny's first three "Exotica" records set the standard for his future recordings and spawned a host of imitators in the exotic music field. ■ Denny recorded on Liberty records from 1957 until 1969, and his band enjoyed worldwide fame, playing in the major hotels and nightclubs across the United States, Europe and Japan. Some of Denny's most accomplished and outstanding records include: "Hypnotique," "Forbidden Island," "Afrodesia" and "Primitiva." He went on to record versions of popular Broadway, Hollywood and television show tunes. ■ With the popularity of high fidelity (hi fi) after World War II, many Americans were content to relax at home and enjoy exotic music in their Polynesian-style basement bars or at their intimate cocktail and dinner parties. ■ Other styles of easy listening mood music were also produced in the 50s. Henry Mancini's themes from *Peter Gunn*, and *Mr. Lucky* are sleek, inventive jazzy mood makers. Actor Jackie Gleason produced many records including "Music, Martinis, and Memories," "Music to Make You Misty" and his masterpiece "Oooo!" in which we hear a woman's voice oooing and ahing over lush string arrangements. Leo Diamond, another 50s composer, produced orchestral mood music utilizing harmonicas and various sound effects including trains, oceans and grunting pigs in a melodic airy and lighthearted style. George Melachrino's series of works, including "Music to Study and Work By," were designed so that, as the liner notes point out, "The privacy of the listener's mind is never invaded so that it may range freely over the most involved manual or intellectual problems without disturbance." Other works included "Music for Daydreaming," and "Music For Two People Alone." ■ In some of Brian Eno's works such as "Another Green World" and "Before and After Science," we find rhythmic, melodic instrumentals highlighted by the introduction of effects and "treatments." Eno's "Ambient" series and his "Music for Airports" have distinct parallels with some of the "exotic" and "Music for..." records of the 50s. Mood music, particularly America's own brand of easy listening, was a dominant music style in the popular culture of the mid-50s. While contemporary composers still make popular mood music, few have created an innovative, popular sound like that which made Les Baxter, Martin Denny and the other composers so popular. Windham Hill Records is a California-based company that has successfully marketed their own brand of exotic mood music. Unfortunately, the results are fairly one-dimensional and seem to be more influenced by the schmaltz of the 50s and the Muzak sounds of the 80s. ■ While the most creative people working with mood music today are integrating ethnic and other musical styles, the most dominant influence seems to be that of electronics. Because of their recent capacity for creating, sampling and storing sounds, electronics is the most direct source of inspiration for the presentday mood music composer. Electronics allows the composer to manufacture and recreate a wide variety of sounds without the need for orchestras, choruses and exotic instruments. Much of this contemporary music tends to be created by musicians previously interested in the "industrial" sound, many of who are now making trance-like music for a more difficult and disturbing time. While it remains to be seen if these experimenters will ever enjoy widespread popularity in popular music, one thing is certain — what is considered experimental and avant-garde often becomes modified and adulterated and ultimately can play a major role in shaping the sound of popular music tomorrow. ■ **The author is presently coproducing a recording of contemporary mood music.**



Text and Photographs  
by Jeff Greenwald



**H**e went to Nepal for isolation, to focus on a first novel. During 13 months based in Kathmandu, Jeff Greenwald found a gulf between living in a visually breathtaking, spiritual environment and being able to sort that experience out and into some literary form. Instead of solitude, he maintained a Buddhist connection with all living things: people through their language and culture; animals encountered along his treks; the publishing establishment, writing articles for *Geo*, *Islands*, and a local Nepali newspaper; and most of all with his friends and associates to whom he confessed all in a humorously affectionate correspondence. From these prolific letters (all written from Kathmandu), *Frank* has culled a series of narratives that manage to be philosophical, yet unobtrusive. Strung together, they are the meditation beads of a writer in transit.

Taken as a whole, the letters reflect a sense of balance. Avoiding the typical East-meets-West clichés, Greenwald is able to lose himself in the supreme beauty of the landscape, yet can report the experience with a healthy dose of cynicism. No longer just a concept, East/West becomes a joyous discipline in itself. His success in rendering this conundrum recalls Gary Snyder's journals from India and Japan. Though vastly different in style, both record physical adventures in a foreign wilderness that in the end becomes a metaphor for the "back country" of the mind. And what better place to log such journeys than in Nepal, which Greenwald describes as "a country that's ever pulling the rug out from under."

Conrad Spielman

# Letters From Nepal



August 29, 1983

Dearest D.,

Every Saturday, my friend Peter Westerman and I head out of the city and attempt "cultural satori" by journeying to spots of interest, ritual and/or enlightenment around the Valley. Last Saturday, we took the morning bus 18km south to Dakshinkali or "Southern shrine of Kali," where the Hindu goes on auspicious Saturdays and Tuesdays to make a wish, to ask a favor large or small from that particular goddess. Ah, but everything has a price... for Kali/Durga is the goddess of wrath and destruction, and in order to petition her one must make an offering at some sort. And there's only one sort she'll accept: blood.

Uphill all the way. Miraculously, the monsoon clouds had drawn back a fraction, and we could see the impossibly high flanks of the northern Himal rising from beyond the Valley wall. A sight to make your heart leap... nothing on Earth compares. We crested the ridge after Chobar Gorge and switch-backed down to a parking lot full of other buses.

The air was thick with smoke, and rancid with the odor of boiling flesh and fresh blood. Along the river, beneath a maze-like confluence of bridges full of gorgeously dressed women and solemn men waiting their turns, squatting pockets of men scooped entrails out of decapitated goat bodies and washed whitened viscera in the clouded water. Peter and I descended to the area where the separate queues of men and women converged. The area — leading into the open-air but enclosed sacrificial arena — was densely packed with devotees and tourists, and I couldn't see a thing. But patience won out... after hanging around a bit I found myself pressed against the metal bars, telephoto in hand, staring with fascinated revulsion at the stone idols utterly bathed in thick crimson, at the tiled floor-area ankle-deep, at the smiling women with flowers and incense and saris and

blood-spattered feet. Still couldn't see anything, as the inner-sanctum Hindus were gathered around the decapitating altar. Most of the killings are done with one, quick stroke, and it's considered bad luck if the head is not severed at once.

But wait — as I stood there, two men, obviously the "executioners," led an unresisting goat into the spot not six feet in front of my face, where the gruesomely ablated idols of Kali and Ganesha waited expectantly. They sprinkled holy water on the animal's neck, scratched it with deceptively gentle fingers, grabbed it under the legs, pulled its head back and...

I was fine while I snapped the photos. Caught the first few slices, the blood spurting onto the dieties, the continued struggles and final result, the headless body kicking on the ground. Snap, snap, snap. Then I backed away, and as my lungs filled with the foul, thick smoke and awful smells, I fell back onto a bench. My ears were ringing, and I felt the blood draining from my face. Every pore opened. I found myself instantly drenched with sweat. My vision began to ring, too, and, realizing to my horror that I was going to faint, I plunged my head down between knees and tried to breathe deeply and evenly. It worked, thank God — fainting at Dakshinkali would have been a pretty humiliating experience, even though I'm certain it's happened before. But the fact remains that I was affected in a profoundly physical way and, even now, the memory of what I saw there fills me with loathing. You know, D., you can go through your life here, dodging trucks, smiling at the monks with quartz watches, stopping in front of the import stores to see the selection of new cassettes, and you forget what a thin veneer the western influence has painted over what is basically a very superstitious, pagan society. It doesn't make me think either less or more of the Nepalis, but it sure opened my eyes as to where I really am. This is *not* Middle Earth.

September 1, 1983

Dear J.,

Today is Krishna's birthday; as I sit here typing I hear a riot of drums and flutes and cockeyed horns parading past the gate, and jump up to check. A stream of people filter by, trodding barefoot through the muddy lane, their faces lit by the white glow of kerosene lamps and fat candles. These people *invented* performance art. Can you imagine the scene? The streets packed with people and



Jeff Greenwald, Kathmandu, Nepal



Jeff Greenwald, Kathmandu, Nepal



**Mule Train**  
Western Nepal



drunken musicians as hundreds of mourning families parade through the streets like Halloween, cows in flowered necklaces everywhere, ten-year old Nepali kids with pasted-on paper beards and canes hobbling beside them... what a world. From Laxmi Puja to Laurie Anderson, I love it all.

And coming up next week is *Teej*, the women's festival, when all the females in the valley dress in brilliant red shirts, saris and dresses and make a mass pilgrimage to the holy Bagmati River (which, a few hundred kilometers south, is called the



Ganges). They strip and bathe erotically in the fast-moving waters, praying to Shiva for their husbands' virility, while the men themselves watch gleefully, often with binoculars, from the opposite bank.

**September 26, 1983**

**Dearest D—,**

Ellora! Ancient cave-temples hewn out of a basalt cliff between 600 and 1200 AD; monuments of the three great faiths of that span (Buddhist, Hindu and Jain) and an even more impressive testament to the days when the prime directive of a king — any king in India — was to encourage the religious spirit of his subjects, whatever form it may take... two enlightened dynasties serving as patrons-of-the-arts extraordinary; eternal evidence of their beneficence the result.

There are about fifty caves in all. Some stretch across the broken cliffside, punctuated by waterfalls and joined by rough stairways. Others are grouped informally above the butte, ringing with watery rhythms at the headwaters of the falls. Mysterious places where the stone pillars reverberate like tablas; deep worship-halls as cavernous as cathedrals; galleries of gods and goddesses bursting from the invaded stone, frozen-and-not-frozen in scenes of dance, heroism, erotic love. In some caves, little islands of color indicate that the temples were once painted with lively celestial scenes, like their earlier companions at Ajanta... but I'll get to that.

Of all the caves, the most spectacular is arguably Kailasa. According to Hindu mythology Kailasa is the Himalayan home of Lord Shiva, the balancer of destruction/creation, Master of the Dance. It took over 7,000 artists at least thirty years to carve, from the top down, a faithful model of Kailasa from the live stone at Ellora. Three million cubic feet of basalt were taken out, but nothing was brought in... every hallway, pillar,

sculpture gallery and stairway was brought down from what originally existed, an ancient echo of Michelangelo's contention that the forms are already there, waiting to be released from the primal stone.

On Saturday, I elected to spend my final day on location visiting the much-celebrated caves at Ajanta. Ellora moved me, but Ajanta knocked my socks off. All day I'd been running through a sour-grapes routine, trying to convince myself that the Ellora caves are "better." They're certainly more raw, wilder, emptier and more mysterious, but they are not better. The strictly Buddhist Ajanta Temples, hewn and painted between the 2nd c. BC and 6th c. AD are unquestionably state-of-the-art, and I can understand why they are surrounded by gates and curio-stalls and powerlines and fueled by an endless *naga* of tourists.

The paintings are so beautiful. What can I say? Every element: the scenes, compositions, pigments — achieves individual mastery. Taken together the effect is stunning. Gorgeous celestial beings shooting down from the clouds; the superb, sensuous figures of Padmapani and Vajrapani, bodhisattvas light and dark; the pink-on-pink dancing girls who, inked from ground lime and lapis lazuli 2,000 years ago challenge Gauguin and Cezanne in their luminous grace... call me stoned, call me spellbound, I was ready to move into those caves.

Aside from the paintings, several sculptures also thrilled me. Buddhas powerful and robust, virile as all hell and ready to shake the world. For the first time, I could feel the sculptor at work, balanced expertly between improvisation and intent.

**Kathmandu**

**November 5, 1983**

**Dear J—:**

Returned the day before Halloween from my trip to the Khumbu region — to be precise, the whole is now called the Sagarmatha National Park, and it's where you find the high mountains. Everest is there; Lhotse, Nuptse, Cho Oyu, all these bizarre Tibetanoid names that have become callwords for me over the past weeks but have no meaning at all to you. Went with a friend Bill, and you'd be hard pressed to find me a less likely companion. You can imagine, most of the people you meet on the trail in those remote regions aren't Americans, but Europeans, etc.; so Bill speaks slowly, clearly, with perfect diction and without n'ts or sn'ts or other abbreviated forms... every word painstakingly announced, which for some reason never failed to set my teeth on edge.

For the next three weeks Bill and I explored the three river valleys of the area. Carried our own packs and managed to weather through some freezing weather (to 15 below C) and high altitudes (up to 18,000') without any serious problems. Being at high altitude is weird indeed, and especially unpleasant at night; your lungs forget how to breathe, and it's a conscious effort to keep them from falling into an abstract choppy rhythm that

*continued*

**Sherpa girl**  
**Hottiya**  
**Arun Valley**



**Seto Bhairab**  
Kathmandu





Himalayan Village,  
Western Nepal

leaves you gasping after five minutes. All through the darkened lodges you can hear the labors of lungs making their peculiar and individual adjustments...gasping, wheezing, panting, rattling, it sounds like a bunch of Spaulding basketballs getting the air squeezed out of them. But all the problems are more than made up for by the territory.

There are some moments, when I would come around a corner and literally stagger backwards as I beheld the sight in front of me; glacier walls five miles high, waterfalls shooting off the edge of the world, lines of Himalayan peaks so sharp and sculptured that it seemed impossible they'd landed that way by nature's random caprice. No amount of staring upward with my mouth hanging open could convince the eye/brain that what it was seeing was as big or as hard or as cold as it was. I began to understand something about why climbers do it; it's fully an ego trip, to be sure; but in the process of fulfilling that power play you really do get to know and to comprehend the mountain in a direct, intimate way that must compare favorably to the anthropomorphised image of faking its brains out. They're not named after goddesses for nothing.

Next to the mountains, the most spectacular things were the glaciers, which brought a reverent "Holy Shit" from my chapped lips every time I saw one. They're literally rivers of ice, and, like rivers, they flow. If the mountains are a mostly visual thrill, these are aural - the constant sound of the shattering, avalanching ice rings like thunder across the surface of a vast crystalline meringue and you're just a speck upon it. Lots of people die on those things; we could've too, if we'd stuck around long enough. My favorite sport was to sit on a ridge and watch a glacier for about an hour - pick out one especially huge boulder and wait for it to heave over or something. Writing it now it sounds like an almost perverse pastime, like those autograph hunters who run around collecting and then sit back and wait for people to die. Actually I must have my head up my ass to write that, because the charge I got out of watching the glaciers was a reassurance that the Earth is actually alive, and that it'll live on long after the wimpy homo sapiens have pulled a mass lemming over the final edge. Amen.

Thought you might like to know I brought the New Testament along as my only reading matter; it caused a lot of raised eyebrows, you can be sure. Hmm, this guy seems okay, but is he a Jesus freak or something? I figured it was time I read the gospels, and boy was I surprised. Expected Jesus to come off more or less like Buddha, but found him amazingly sarcastic and hot-tempered, "conduct unbecoming the Messiah." The miracles are impressive, no doubt, but I almost think he could've made a similar point with a talking poodle; I like him best when he stashes the gimmicks aside and delivers his famous one-liners ("Let he who is without sin..." etc.). All together the NT left me pretty disillusioned and in no danger of getting religion any time soon. Frankly, I'm a little disappointed...I was ready for anything when I left this place.

Dear J \_\_\_\_\_:

Happy New Year. They have these firecrackers here that you can hold in your hand as they ex-

plode...actually they're the same ones we had as kids except that our mothers told us they'd blow our fingers off and theirs never did. Now I understand how these Hindoos can swallow cobras without getting nailed; their mothers never told them not to.

Dear L \_\_\_\_\_:

Kathmandu is becoming like anyplace else, at least to me at this point. Have my friends, my haunts, my bicycle, my daily splurges and petty arguments and occasional shaveandhaircut. But an interesting thing has been happening as of late - two snakes have been seen performing an odd little twine-routine in a water-hole a few miles out of town, and the locals believe it's a reincarnation of Vishnu, the Preserver, one of the three Mr. Bigs of the Hindu pantheon. So practically overnight a new set of legends have sprung up, and a place that was a mudhole a couple of weeks ago is surrounded with refreshment stands (Nepali style) and constant throngs of hopeful devotees...as well as curious heathens like myself.

Yes, I went, and waited in the steaming rice-paddy afternoon heat along with about 50 other people. After all, one must go - for the details, if nothing else. For example, the lightbulb someone rigged up over the place where the snakes like to pop up, or the sight of the old man who has adopted the site as his own personal project and spends the whole day taking up collections and "guarding" the serpents. Well, after hanging out there about a half hour, I was about to leave, when the crowd stirred and one of the pagas slowly rose out of the water...stock still...not even looking from side to side, just staring straight ahead...then, just as slowly, lowering (his/her/it?)self back into the murk.

Well, no sooner had the creature disappeared than the theories and speculations began to fly. "Just wait," said one man, "and you'll see five more: all of different colors!" Another guy, a Tibetan, insisted the snake was plastic. But an old woman quickly reprimanded him, reminding the guy that the last person to disparage the herp was killed in a car accident the following day.

Dear L.B.,

I think about you a lot out here. This is the land where the State is religion, the culture is religion, the art is religion, and religion is performance. From the daily decapitations at Dakshinkali to the steaming altars heaped with flowers, there's always a drum beating at you from someplace. I and those like me live like tweezers, pressing together the polar sides of our western/eastern perceptions to pick out the sharp points. I don't know if it's a blessing or a curse, but it gets easier and easier to just be yourself, wherever you happen to be. This isn't D.H. Lawrence's Asia, engulfing you like the slippery thighs of the medicine-man's wife; closer maybe to Pygmalion, although you never know when the stone is going to burst into life.

Stopped my bicycle on the glaring, dusty road today and watched a cow watching a crowd watching a mechanical crane. The crane operator is bummed because the lever's jammed. The crowd is bummed because the show is stalled. The cow is

bummed because yesterday's field has become tomorrow's slum. I watch impassively, but the taxi driver behind me is bummed, and blasts a good one at me - one like you'd never hear in the States. And so ends my reflection on the spiritual: with the realization that once cows are no longer holy here, the whole system will start leaking as fast as a spastic udder. It's leaking already, of course; that, I suppose is why I'm here. Not to patch the leaks, of course, but to lap up the goods.

Any decaying culture passes through a period of great sighing and those sighs deserve to be recorded.

February 28, 1984

Dear J \_\_\_\_\_,

I've decided that the book I'm theoretically going to write out here will be a collection of inter-related short stories set on the treks. So it's been fun to deal with the trail under all kinds of different conditions, even some as subtle as walking with or without a stick.

There are no lack of ideas for short stories. What is lacking is the discipline to sit myself down at the typewriter four or five hours a day and make all the necessary mistakes.

April 1, 1984

Dearest D \_\_\_\_\_,

Feeling bizarre and twisted up for a number of reasons, but I think the main problem is that, for the first time in Nepal, I actually have some, malevolent parasite in my system which requires vigilant medical treatment. Loathe to patronize the greedy foreign medics and distrusting all doctors, I fire blindly at the parasites with an arsenal of herbs and chemicals, figuring that at any rate the amebas ought to feel pretty unwelcome by now and might well take the hint.

While we were in India there passed the yearly celebration of Holi, an orgy of verbal promiscuity and kaleidoscopic madness. For three or four days the male population goes nuts, and the air is filled with clouds of colored powder and storms of colored water. To step onto the streets is to be drenched and dyed every color of the rainbow and then some. People walk through the town looking like characters from an acid overdose, redgreennyellow&blue head to toe, every inch of skin and clothing saturated from continuous mutual attacks. Needless to say this holiday offers Indian men the Perfect Opportunity to grab and molest (all in "good fun") western women, since their own females (for whom the holiday is designed) are too chickenshit to walk the streets, and the men themselves are too chickenshit to pursue them. Teri got fairly well mauled, and even now, in Nepal, there are still women walking around whose blonde hair was all but permanently dyed by the pink festivities.

May 20, 1984

Dear J \_\_\_\_\_,

The time of the subtle changes, most of them complete but hitherto invisible, like Rick taking off his shoe the other night and suddenly realizing, with resigned alarm, "Yeah...my feet...they didn't use to look this way. They're broader. They've become Nepali feet..." And in his voice that monotonic acceptance of all the subtle yet freakish alterations, most of which you can't even see. Parts of our lives and pieces of our bodies that have evolved to let us survive in Asia, that will be no more than irritants or curiosities when we return to the west. It's all so hazy, that border between evolution and affectation...

I returned May 12 from a three-week long solo trek to the Arun Valley. Hadn't planned to go alone, tho' I not-so-secretly wanted to, and what I hinted at was what I got. It was a terror at first - my body was so tense and constricted the first couple of days that I almost just turned around and headed home. It's hard to be alone in an alien world. I did grow up to it. Spent weeks eating nothing but rice and potatoes and *dhal*, seeing only Nepali and Tibetan faces, speaking nothing but their language. A very private sojourn, punctuated with great stories. There were ultimately some setbacks and disappointments - I couldn't go over a pass I'd planned to do because the weather was shitty, but I did find out where I could bribe an official in order to get my trekking permit endorsed for the Restricted Areas...the narrow, verdant upper reaches of the Arun, less than a day's walk to Tibet. The trek was more physical than visual. None of the mind-blowing vistas of the Everest or Annapurna areas, although there were moments when I would just stand on a ridge, staring out onto the sun-short valleys and snow-crowned peaks, and find my heart hammering through my chest and start babbling to myself in English, "Oh, God, I love Nepal..."

May 23, 1984

Lovely L.B.,

In a month or so the monsoon will start, breaking the back of this suffocating dry season. The air will cool; enormous clouds will swarm across the sky; rain will roar down two, three, four times a day, followed by moments of intense sunshine, rain-bows, the landscape greening even as the city gutters overflow with mud and shit. Lightning will explode in the night and I'll be lying up in bed at 3 in the morning wondering how it could ever rain so hard and so long. Those moments make me extremely horny, but the only living things in my flat will be a few gecko lizards and Pablo the mouse. I'll make do.

June 12, 1984

Dear J \_\_\_\_\_,

The monsoon is in full swing. Getting around is miserable, but the flowers and cloudscape more than make up for it. More time spent indoors than usual, although I'm out to swim (at the Hotel Annapurna) every afternoon. This solitary final act, like most soliloquies, contains a fair share of self-analysis. Actually, that's the worst word I could have used; let me say self-appraisal. Naturally this is an ongoing process through one's life, but there is a remarkable difference. In the west this introspection takes place under the eye of a competitive and all consuming lifestyle; here in Nepal one works beneath the serene and charming regard of Buddha. Live with the enclosed gift for a while and you'll begin to understand...instead of a sub-audible "more...more...more..." one hears the placid "fine...fine...fine..." Different kinds of encouragement, I guess. Even swimming is different somehow. When I jump into the pool at about 2 or 3 I see the upcoming laps as a relaxed, even yogic meditation. To put it yet another way - in the west I'd be thinking about how my bathing suit looked on me, in the east I'm more concerned with the fit of my *chakras*.

June 22, 1984

Dear M \_\_\_\_\_,

It's almost ten in the morning. Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto #1 is rustling from the stereo behind me while just ahead, right outside my window, the day's first monsoon downpour is abetting to a trickle. There is an onion on my desk: a Dutch woman named Sophie told me that the best cure for a head cold is to sniff a halved onion once or twice every fifteen minutes.

The sky is turning gray as a hippo's ass, and it's about to rain for the first time in ten minutes. The monsoon is quite nice, but it would be lovely without the taxis and motorcycles that careen through the alleys and throw waves of hookworm-infested muck on their way...ah, it's tough to be a Buddhist. But I've got to keep trying. Those deep breaths are all that keep me from yanking open the taxi doors and pulling out the vacant-brained drivers, introducing them face-first to the nearest mountain of goat-shit. But *calme-toi*; all is beneficence; remember the Eightfold Path.

I'm clearly out of control with this letter. Time for another whiff of onion.

July 3, 1984

Dearest D \_\_\_\_\_,

Jazz and a slight headache at 11:30 pm. With only a couple of days left in Nepal it's necessary to burn a little midnight oil. And I definitely want to write you before I leave - you were the first person I wrote to from Nepal, and will be the second to last. You can imagine the various traumas assailing me as I prepare to empty my home, eat my farewell dinners and pack my bags.

But I must confess that all is not glum and sad. Last Saturday, a friend and I went up the valley rim to a beautiful ridge. We lay on the prayer-flag covered hilltop and watched the flags of every color and description - tens of thousands of them - flap in the breeze, like a stampede of hooves. I could see the current of prayers rising, shimmering off the hill like heat-mist off a hot highway. I don't think I've ever felt more relaxed or more lucky. When it got late, and the evening monsoon clouds filled the valley like a school of whales, we climbed down to the ridiculous Volkswagen. The whole village was massed around it, just admiring it with wonder; and we had to admire it, too. We climbed in.

Sons and fathers strolled with white teeth along the roadside and smoke from the cement factory filled the Valley with death-gray smoke. But we were very alive. We just went home and danced, danced, danced, then drank beer and danced some more. That was the last time I felt good enough to dance.



They spoke, I think, of perils past. They spoke, I think, of peace at last. One thing I remember:  
Spring came on forever. Spring came on forever, said the Chinese nightingale.

*The Chinese Nightingale*  
Vachel Lindsay



Fashion Hank Ford China Nights

Photography by Stefano Massei. Models: Katie and Anna Clay. Make-up: Ziggie Kato. Headpiece constructions: Gail Allen.



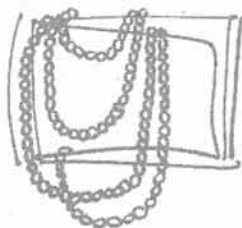




Illustration by K. Bifulco

# COCKTAIL LOUNGES

Art bars, working men's saloons, old North Beach pubs, Latino hotspots, all are fine places to drink, in their way, but don't overlook Nob Hill's hotel cocktail lounges as your next watering holes. There are pluses to visiting Nob Hill for a drink that you may not have considered.

1. The lighting in these bars invariably sets you off to advantage.

2. Drinking in a hotel bar can give you the sense that you are traveling but it's cheaper, somewhat, than the real thing.

3. The acoustics are often so good that you can hear your companion's conversation.

4. If you are having an illicit relationship chances are good you will not run into anyone you know.

5. You can get a good drink and attentive service for roughly twice the price you would pay for a bad drink and an indifferent service in North Beach.

6. There is no scene to make, you can relax because nothing is happening at these places but comfort, glamour, and luxury.

7. Everyone needs a break from bohemia. In Europe artists and people of that ilk are traditionally unafraid of a good bottle of wine and beautiful surroundings.

8. The regular clientele on Nob Hill has flocked south of Market to gaze at the highly overrated art scene there. Return the favor by invading the hallowed halls of their sacred saloons.

9. These lounges provide a backdrop for a number of fantasies you may wish to enter-

tain. More later.

10. If you have a lingering motion that some of these establishments might be pretentious, they are the soul of modesty and warm welcoming compared to certain "art bars" I know.

Le Cirque (Fairmont Hotel, 772-5000, 3 PM to 1 AM Monday through Saturday) is less gaudy and touristic than the other Fairmont cocktail lounges. A hot spot in the 20s, it was closed down for many years but now you can have afternoon tea or cocktails. With the Circus wall panels, the gilt and mirrors and a chanteuse wearing Daisy attire complete with white cloche hat, this is the ideal backdrop for a madcap heir or heiress fantasy. Listening to the tunes of Bessie Smith you can easily imagine Scott and Zelda and Carl van Vechten sitting at the table opposite downing several too many sidecars.

The cocktail lounge at l'Etoile (Huntington Hotel, 1075 California at Taylor, Monday through Saturday 771-1529) is small and popular. You may have to wait a few minutes to sit in the warmly lit room at a banquette table clad in leopard spots. The crowd here is more San Franciscan than at some of the others. Many people are drawn to hear Peter Mintun tinkle the ivories. This is the place to go if you are aching to see a glimpse of the lifestyles of the rich and famous or if you are slightly tired of feeling like everyone in the world has dyed black hair and is under 40. While smoke gets in your eyes, you'll see La Vie En Rose and a lot of real jewelry.



Illustrations by Claire DeLong

If the Austrian Secessionists appeal to you, hightail it to the Redwood Room. (Clift Hotel, Geary at Taylor, 775-4700.) There you can become a Belle Epoque aristocrat. The redwood walls, warm and luxurious, are hung with Klimts. Management at the Redwood Room was once so conservative that in the 60s Rudolf Nureyev was refused entry because his hair grew beyond his collar. Times have changed. My friends and I have always been welcome which is saying a lot. I know one Frank writer who rewards herself for her labors as a journalist by putting on her pillbox hat and heading for the Redwood to sip martinis, alone. The pianists play requests from Eine Kleine Nacht Musik to Holiday in Cambodia. The Redwood Room is a place to

make an entrance. The waitresses take delight in serving those a little more colorful than their usual sedate clientele. Sitting under the shimmering Klimts imagine that D'Annunzio, the Marchessa Cassati or Eleanora Duse have joined your table.

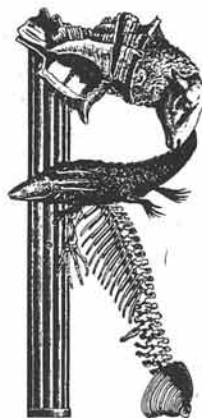
Finally there is Alexis (California at Mason across from the Mark Hopkins.) Now you sit in a Byzantine Russian Hunting Lodge. The bar is cozy and candlelit, a perfect hideaway on a cold winter night. At ten o'clock musicians enter. At eleven the disco opens in a cavernous room hung with animal heads with a huge fireplace containing fire breathing dragon endirons. Isn't that Count Vronsky over there with Anna Karenina?

Holly Erickson

Writing about the ugliest building has always been a pet idea of mine. There are many, many very ugly buildings in this city. This article won't touch on more than a few

## UGLY BUILDINGS

and I'm sure you have your own list. Some buildings get a bad rap, but are actually quite interesting, and I have a favorite in that department.



## REVIEWS



Remember when the Jack Tar Hotel was built? It was sometime in the 50s and I was just a little kid riding up Van Ness Avenue lying on the small deck behind the back seat of my father's Oldsmobile, looking up at the most modern thing I'd ever seen. It was truly a wonder. Everything about it was new, futuristic, sweeping, spacious. It was covered with panels of some unidentifiable construction materials tinted turquoise and pink and even had a drive-up ramp (in the future, nothing will be at street level). There was a partially underground parking garage encaged by a steel gridwork randomly peppered with little pink and turquoise squares.

The lobby was tomorrowland. There was an X-shaped stairway (treads only — no risers) that dropped out of the ceiling like the bottom of a spaceship. The walls were a rich vivid blue-green interspersed with wide expanses of the kind of wood paneling that's usually associated with medical buildings. The piece de resistance was the fountain at the bottom of the stairs. It was constructed of thin steel rods in the shape of a free-form grid, suggesting a sculpture by Paul Klee (if he had been a cubist...) embellished with brightly

colored, free-form fist sized globs of acrylic plastic, dripping gaily with water, and rose out of a wide, low pool in the center of the lobby — it was the future. For the opening of the hotel, the fountain was filled with thirty-five thousand dollars worth of Arpege parfum.

This was our city's architecture lesson from Los Angeles, where they had an X-shaped building (the Statler Hilton) with leopard-print walls. Now, when one walks through the remodeled lobby, there is an air of placid acceptance, almost resignation, of architecture's dissolution into the soft beige, gray, and lavender corporate taste of the 80s. The old Jack Tar smirked and hissed, the new Jack Tar (now the Cathedral Hill) recites its lines in an acceptable whisper. This building would no longer say anything bad about people behind their backs and provides a perfect setting for firewalking seminars.

There are other buildings that insult everybody, especially their inhabitants, only people often don't notice it.

On Twin Peaks there's such a building, a large white box of a house, bound with very black trim, some structural, but mostly just

"for trim." It's completely uncharming and seems to regard the neighborhood as a tasteless joke, the kind that makes you uncomfortable to hear. The outside makes no bones about stating that the inside is equally uninteresting, and, with the addition of some really bad furniture, could perhaps become even more so.

The best thing about living in this house would be not having to look at the outside. But life, or maybe bad-taste-karma, took revenge, and across the street is the most tasteless mockorangerie this side of Trousdale Estates, replete with a faux-mansard slate-look roof. These houses deserve each other. Unfortunately, the neighborhood deserves neither of them.

Another of my favorite eyesores is the apartment building jutting boldly out from Anza Vista hill across Euclid from the former Fireman's Fund Insurance building (also formerly turquoise, now a hushed, dark gray — perhaps Jack Tar was the architect?) This structure is one I have driven past at least twice a day for the past five years and each time I think to myself what a repulsive building it is. It bears no relation to the landscape, the surrounding buildings or even

the weather — all the apartments open onto balconies in an area where the weather is too severe to ever use them. The building WAS painted black, and made me think of the ritzy parts of Saigon, or Singapore.

Once I was driving past the above building with my friend Kursheed. Now, Kursheed lives in Bombay and has been in this country just a few times and I am always astounded by her wisdom and spontaneity. When Kursheed saw this building she said to me "Look at this beautiful building on the hill... don't you find it interesting, Rob?" What could I say? I bit my tongue and quietly agreed, glancing up the eyesore with furrowed brow and feeling betrayed, as if a friend had sided against me in an argument, only now when I drive past, I notice that I don't find it so ugly. I wonder if this can really be me, having these thoughts that the ugliest building in the city isn't so bad after all. It's as if speaking words to the contrary disarmed my negative evaluations. A lesson learned from the ugliest building in the city.

Rob Bregoff



# BOOK

# GROCERY

# STORE

Books by women and "women's books" are entirely different things. The former is merely a factual category. The latter is the bane of modern literature and the source of fear and grumpiness for many readers. Women's books tend to probe and delve into an unappealingly sour and/or weak heroine in much the same manner that one picks at a scab on one's knee and involving about that much interest for others (who cares about scabs on other people's knees?). The author follows the heroine through thinly disguised autobiographical complaints until, in the end, the heroine finds herself. In other words, these books are like dreadful telephone calls from people you don't like. Flights of fancy, humor and themes are strictly eschewed as patriarchal notions and frivolous self-indulgence. The very fact that these books can be described by category instead of plot or image gives some indication of their flatness.

This is not merely a directionless tirade; it is a tirade fully anchored in my expectations about *Housekeeping* by Marilynne Robinson. Alack, I thought when I saw the title, this will be a series of complaints about dusting. Alack, I thought when I saw the cover — a perfectly hideous portrait of a woman sitting in a pond — this will be about a swarthy man with lots of chest hair who takes the heroine away from her mildew problems. I thought that I smelled a woman's book. I realized I was wrong when I got to the second page and read the following description:

"The terrain on which the town itself is built is relatively level, having once belonged to the lake. It seems there was time when the dimensions of things modified themselves... Sometimes in the spring the old lake will return. one will open a cellar door to wading boots floating tallowy soles up and planks and buckets bumping at the threshold, the stairway gone from sight after the second step... Our house was at the edge of town on a little hill, so we rarely had more than a black pool in our cellar, with a few skeletal insects skidding around on it. A narrow pond would form in the orchard, water clear as air covering grass and black leaves and fallen branches, all around it black leaves and drenched grass and fallen branches, and on it slight as an image in an eye, sky, clouds, trees, our hovering faces and our cold

hands."

This is almost literally breathtaking — the phrases "tallowy soles," "skeletal insects" and "our hovering faces" can cause something like a hiccup of recognition. The writing throughout *Housekeeping* maintains this caliber as well as this otherworldly quality, which seems to be a function of exceptionally pure vision.

*Housekeeping* is about a girl named Ruth and her sister, whose stock of parents and guardians is depleted until they are left in the care of their aunt, Sylvie, who cannot keep a house or housekeep. The story is about the ensuing dissolution of what Ruth's neighbors call a normal childhood. But the book is about dissolution itself, its concurrence of comfort and coldness. The clarity and extraordinary poetry of the writing belie the story's narrowness of focus and endow the whole of *Housekeeping* with the resonance of allegory. It is prophetic in the same way that Dino Buzzati's *The Tartar Steppe*, Alain-Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes* and Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* are prophetic: the characters are fully drawn and convincing, but they mean more than themselves, they are universal as well as particular.

To be appreciated, this resonance must be held up against the lack thereof in the women's books that flood the nation's bookstores. *Housekeeping's* plot seems superficially similar — probing and delving into the characters of Ruth and Sylvie — but its essence is altogether different. The fancifulness that is left sternly untouched by authors such as Ann Beattie, Alice Adams and Doris Lessing (science fiction notwithstanding) touches every aspect of this book. The desert flatness and uniformity of much modern writing gives way in *Housekeeping* to variations of opacity and clarity — unevenly shadowed and illumined writing. Best of all, the heroine's goal is not to find herself, but to lose herself, which seems an honest anomaly in a world of self-help.

However, it is not in comparison to these women's books that *Housekeeping* should be read; the effect of Marilynne Robinson's writing makes it un-comparable, if not incomparable.

Annie Barrows

# BOOK

They huddle in a doorway across the street from my window, pulled back into the shadow as though they are afraid of the thin morning sunlight. It's hard to determine their age or sex; they wear black rags and their faces are ashen. Judging from their gestures and the high pitch of their voices, I guess that they are teenage girls. They look like survivors of some apocalyptic disaster, with deep circles under their eyes and pale bloodless lips. Or some of George Romero's undead, recently risen from the grave. During the rest of the week, they wear kilts and go to Parochial school. On weekends, they play out this macabre masquerade.

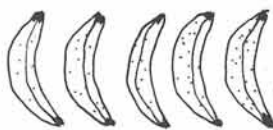
Looking at them I remember reading a description of a 14th century phenomena known as the "danse macabre" in Barbara Tuchman's *A Distant Mirror*. Huge throngs of urban youth would deck themselves out as corpses and perform a bizarre dance of spastic gestures and frenzied leaps. A dance reminiscent of a man dying on the gallows, or

the convulsions of someone racked by a horrifying disease. Tuchman suggests that these spontaneous performances may have been a response to the extreme anxiety felt by very young people when confronted with a future that seems only to hold death and suffering. I think that their elders must have looked down at them from their windows with the same confusion and regret I feel today. Perhaps they turned to one another and said, "The kids these days!!!"

This is fundamentally what I love about reading history. There is so much in the human condition that is universal, and the reach of our existence is full of echoes and repeated patterns. Inspection of these patterns often yields a sense of familiarity I find strangely comforting. It is good to know that there is little we go through that has not been experienced before. That our little daily problems are the problems of the world.

I derived this sense of comfort recently from a book called *A Nervous Splendor*,

When my life begins to seem unusually complicated and my dreams are full of helicopters and all the dark curly-headed men I know seem determined to send me around the twist; when things get really bad, I start thinking about going grocery shopping with my mother. Not just anywhere, mind you. For this daydream to have its desired beneficial effect, it must be set in Kaune's Food Town in Santa Fe, New Mexico. There must be the aroma of barbecued chicken in foil bags, tamales being warmed under a heat lamp and the faint, sticky smell of the bakery in back. There must be little piles of shavings on the red linoleum floor, left by the big retarded boy who sweeps all day long. There must be Leroy the butcher, who can whistle two different intervals simultaneously and who always includes a bone with the hamburger, just in case you know a deserving dog. There must be Elsie the check-out lady, who has lavender hair and never makes a mistake. There must be a bag of Pepperidge Farm Milano cookies, to be opened and sampled and polished off on the way home. For maximum results, it should be about 3:30 on a Friday afternoon, and I should be eight years old.



I can remember Kaune's Food Town as clearly as any house I've ever lived in. I can tell you that there are four ancient cash registers, that the coffee faces the cat food on aisle one, that the apple juice is across from the canned fish in aisle three, and that there has been a display of Bavarian Mints and popcorn balls next to the last cash register for 26 years. There are no electronic devices at Kaune's, unless you count the rippling stream in the Coors clock. When they were forced to hire a security guard (more in the spirit of keeping up with the competition than out of real need) they managed to hire a serene young man who appears to be in a trance all the time. You could eat an entire honeydew right in front of him with no response. If they are short of help, he'll even carry your groceries out to your car for you.

While engaging in one of these fantasies recently (we decided on rib roast and acorn squash, and my mother advised me to quit my job) I realized that I must add my interest in grocery stores to my growing list of minor

obsessions. I'm talking about bona-fide grocery stores, not the convenience store that hovers in a pool of Spielberg light off the side of the interstate, nor the corner store where a spotty teenaged Armenian dispenses lottery tickets and King Cobra. I'm talking about a place with aisles and fruit and vegetables and fresh meat; a place where you could buy enough food to last for a month if you were so inclined.

I'm not saying that I LIKE all grocery stores. There are some that I find quite threatening, like the Safeway in the Marina. There is an overwhelming feeling of potential violence in the place, which may emanate from the parking lot, where I have been nearly run over more times than anywhere else in the city. There is also an unbelievably sinister man with no nose who lurks around the potato chips and comes up behind me with no warning. Whenever I shop there, I never seem to leave with the cheese or whatever I meant to buy. I come away with something quite different; a package of pork rinds, say, or a jar of Drano.

Nor am I overly fond of the Cala on California and Larkin, although for entertainment value, it can't be beat. If it's Saturday night and it's too late for a movie, and you don't want to pay a cover charge to watch someone take a television apart with a ball-peen hammer somewhere south of Market, you might consider a visit to Cala. You can find people conversing with pig's feet, elderly Chinese gentlemen doing the soft-shoe — a whole array of humanity recently escaped from a Fellini movie. One night I saw a guy swallow a whole banana, peel and all. He seemed to have felt that he had proved some kind of point, and declined an encore.

I do like Petrini's on Masonic, because it provides both entertainment and an abundance of food-stuffs that gives the phrase "an embarrassment of riches" new meaning. When I shop at other stores, I tend to do it at a clockwise gallop, with occasional forays up and down the aisles. At Petrini's, I adopt a shuffling gait that seems better suited to the museum. I linger by the meat department, where the butchers keep up a spirited infield chatter. "Do you know why I do it this way?" one of them will say, wielding a blade as long as my forearm and reducing some huge piece of meat to so many chops. "Do you know why? Because it's the RIGHT way. And I always do things the RIGHT Way." The other butchers mimic him and make disparaging noises with their tongues. The customers laugh and weave an intricate

continued on next page



which evokes two years of turmoil and change in fin-de-siecle Vienna. I use the word advisedly; Frederic Morton has a tremendous flair for the evocative. His writing is pure joy to read and his subject is one of the most fascinating times in modern history. What a bewildering beautiful city Vienna must have

been, full of contradictions and anachronism. And her people — what a cast of characters!

A youthful Sigmund Freud strides around the Maria Theresienstrasse, aware that his work with hypnosis and sexuality is leading him somewhere quite new, but where?

continued on next page



dance, jockeying for position, a better view of the roasts.

The fruit and vegetable section of Petri's brings on something like religious fervor. I stand for a long minute before the fresh herbs, breathing in the clear smells of rosemary and sage that remind me of childhood rides on the ridges around Aspen. The tumble of tangerines evokes another memory and I buy a couple for their good smell and comforting feeling in the hand. And the lettuce! Limestone lettuce and butter lettuce and romaine and red leaf; not just the anaemic iceberg of lesser stores. I can hardly contain myself when the garlic season is young and there's a whole bin of plump heads, fat and oily within their parchment skins.

Then it's off to buy saki ika, or a peculiar Mexican confection called Ibarra that is good melted in hot milk, but better consumed in tough crumbly chunks while standing in a midnight kitchen. Maybe there's some dolmas from the deli, and some oysters, and a dozen iris on the way out the door. I rarely love our capitalist society as well as when I stagger out of Petri's with my arms full of bounty.

I love the New Shop'n Save on Haight because they thoughtfully located the toy section right up front, next to the cashier, so I can pick up a squirt gun in the shape of a Uzi along with a quart of milk. I love the Cala on Stanyon for their barbecued turkey wings,

which are more a form of exercise than a form of food. I love the Farmer's Market on Irving and Fifth because they serenade their tomatoes with Chinese opera. I love the Park'n Shop down the street because it's right across the street from the Saint Anne of the Sunset School, which always reminds me of how glad I am to never have to be 13 again. And so on.

But none of these can touch my memories of Kaune's Food Town. Perhaps this is due to a kind of nostalgia, a yearning for the warm secure feeling of walking slowly about with my mother, selecting the meals for the next few days and solving the problems of the world. So what if the avocados were like rocks and the lamb chops were tiny? So what if our solutions were often impractical and sometimes downright bad? As long as we were surrounded by the smell of the chickens and the improbable music of Leroy's whistling, the ground was firm beneath us and life was good.

**Alix Pitcher**



Illustration by Claire Delong

# REVIEWS

Book review continued

Johann Strauss yearns for the stormy rain-lashed nights he needs to compose — he has an opera, after so many years, to work on. Sarah Bernhardt thrills the crowd at the opulent new Court Theatre and then skips town to avoid a tax lien of three thousand gulden. The assembled glitterati includes Gustav Mahler, Hugo Wolf, Anton Bruckner, Johannes Brahms and Gustav Klimt.

But all these lives are bound about with a dark thread, and it is to this thread Morton gives the majority of his attention. He focuses on the Crown Prince Rudolf, the darling of the Austrian Empire. A handsome and remarkably intelligent man, the Prince suffocated under the dense protocol generated by his father's court. Powerful in potential but rendered quite impotent by the baroque domination of the Emperor Franz Joseph, Rudolf foresaw the eminent collapse of the empire and could only cry out his prescient warnings under a pseudonym in a local newspaper. He loathed and envied the new Kaiser, Wilhelm, but was forced to kowtow to him in public. He feared the prospect of a European war, knowing there would be no glory in such destruction. Dressed in ornate uniforms and encrusted with decorations, he sweated through interminable court dinners, and held his tongue, and went slowly mad.

This particular madness seems to have spread through Vienna like a contagion. Mahler wrote to a friend, "Why hast thou lived? Why hast thou suffered? Is it all nothing

but a huge, terrible joke?" Suicide among the young and privileged became common. The industrial revolution had brought soot and sweatshouses to the city but the streets were still half-illuminated by guttering flame. The young Pan-Germans howled out their anti-Semitism on street-corners, and their mouthings did not fall on entirely deaf ears. It was a time of transition for an entire people and like all such times, it was punctuated by feelings of anxiety and bouts of hysteria.

Does it sound familiar? How about this: "African and hot-blooded, crazy with life — restless . . . passionate . . . the devil is loose here." Words that might have been used to describe a young Elvis Presley, or the chaos at Woodstock. Words written to describe the latest craze among the young — words actually written to describe that most barbaric of dances, the waltz.

Morton's eye for detail is exquisite and his talents as a storyteller are formidable. He tells a hundred little stories as he tells his more important one, without diminishing one or the others. The importance of his main subject is unquestionable — had Rudolf lived and inherited his father's power, it is unlikely that World War I would have been fought. Germany would not have suffered the degradations of the Treaty of Versailles and the child of Alois and Klara Hitler might have come into a world less ripe for his depraved kind of genius. What makes this book so engaging, however, are the little stories. The story of Bratfish, the whistling fiacre driver who whisked the Crown Prince to his doom. The story of Johann Pfeiffer, King of the Birds, who performed Shakespeare with trained parrots and leaped to his death clutching the sign that was his signature: "LIFE IS SERIOUS BUT ART IS GAY." Life is serious, but art is gay.

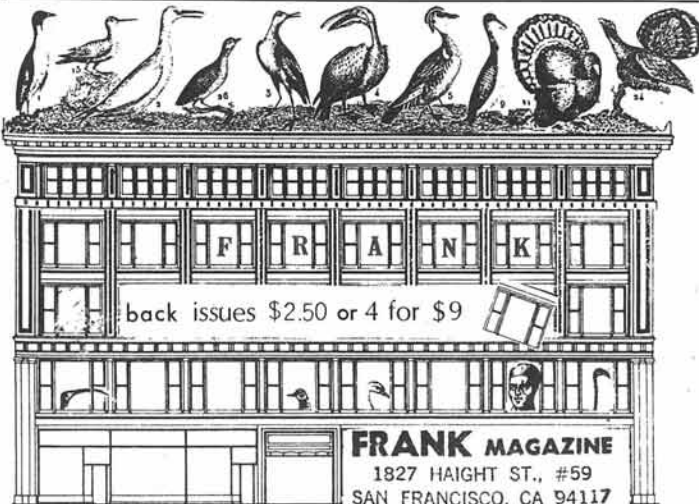
*A Nervous Splendor* is available in paperback from Penguin.

**Alix Pitcher**

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# THE DRINK

by Karin Victoria

Uncle yelled at me from the boat. He yelled at me, lean forward at the waist, duck your head, ears between elbows. I sobbed quietly, shivering in my new blue bathing suit as my stomach and the black water churned. Bend over he yelled. But I was paralyzed. Only my eyes moved, searching for the tiny movement that indicated turtle. Uncle used to shoot them. There were hundreds of mud turtles. You could always spot one's head poking up from the surface. They peeked from underneath — a glance at above in the breathing world before they quickly descended. They disappeared as soon as they were spotted. They peeked and descended silently. They were everywhere.

I glanced back at the shore to see Dessa sitting in the shade, near the clothesline. She looked hot and swollen. How many times had I tried to persuade Dessa to remove her girdle and dip in the cool water? It was time to dive. Oh God, I can't dive. Bend over he yelled. It seemed like hours before I sensed myself falling. I fell endlessly into black then into green, deep to where the mud turtles are. The boats are above. Uncle still sits upright in his boat, peering down past his fishing line, staring into black, hoping he won't hook muck, wishing for supper. Dessa now snaps the beans, boils the water and starts to set the table with the plastic dishes. I'll miss supper. Uncle tugs at the surface of the water. He drags a lily pad, he snags muck, he curses. Dessa waves from shore. Come eat. Uncle turns the boat slowly and heavily, pushing against the water, fighting the wake, the pull. I see the boat turn and head for shore. Dessa's still on shore. She still looks swollen from the relentless sun, her thighs puffing out from under her stained yellow dress. Why doesn't she take her nylons off, why doesn't she come in the water?

Underneath, my legs look bloated, fat around the elastic, out-of-proportion with the rest of the corps above. They wave like lily stalks, suspended yet connected. I like the way they look — bloated and unhuman, kind of like pasty-color appendages moving in slow-motion. They are gray and dead and swollen yet they are graceful like a dancer. Aunt calls for the children, she cuts into the meat. Aunt's face is round, punched in at the cheeks, eyes like blue buttons, wrinkles receding into her head. Her red painted mouth punctuates her white face. She moves slowly. Now I prefer being underneath. It seems safe here — the sounds of outside covered by water. My breathing only echoing itself, bouncing in my head. The world only looks rose and yellow, muted and slow. Underneath I can hear my own voice, and of course the breathing. The breathing is constant, punctual, never-ending as it propels me.

The fish fly past. Fish that are smooth and white slip through the water. Armless and strapped in their bodies they are confined by their shape, always with a panicked, hurting expression on their faces. The eyes show fear, even when they lie frozen on the ice, their mouths agape, caught in mid-sentence. Uncle is still in the boat. The loudness turned off, I hear nothing. The fish breathe. Dessa sets down the forks. Uncle pulls the boat to shore. He lifts the motor up, out of the water. He shifts his weight forward on the aluminum, the boat sways softly. The boat sits on the muck because of his weight. It doesn't move. He doesn't have to tie the boat to the post but he does. There are patched holes in the aluminum. A safety sticker on the side. Dessa bitches. Her puppet mouth moves even before any sound is released. Two lines are etched in her face from the corners of her mouth

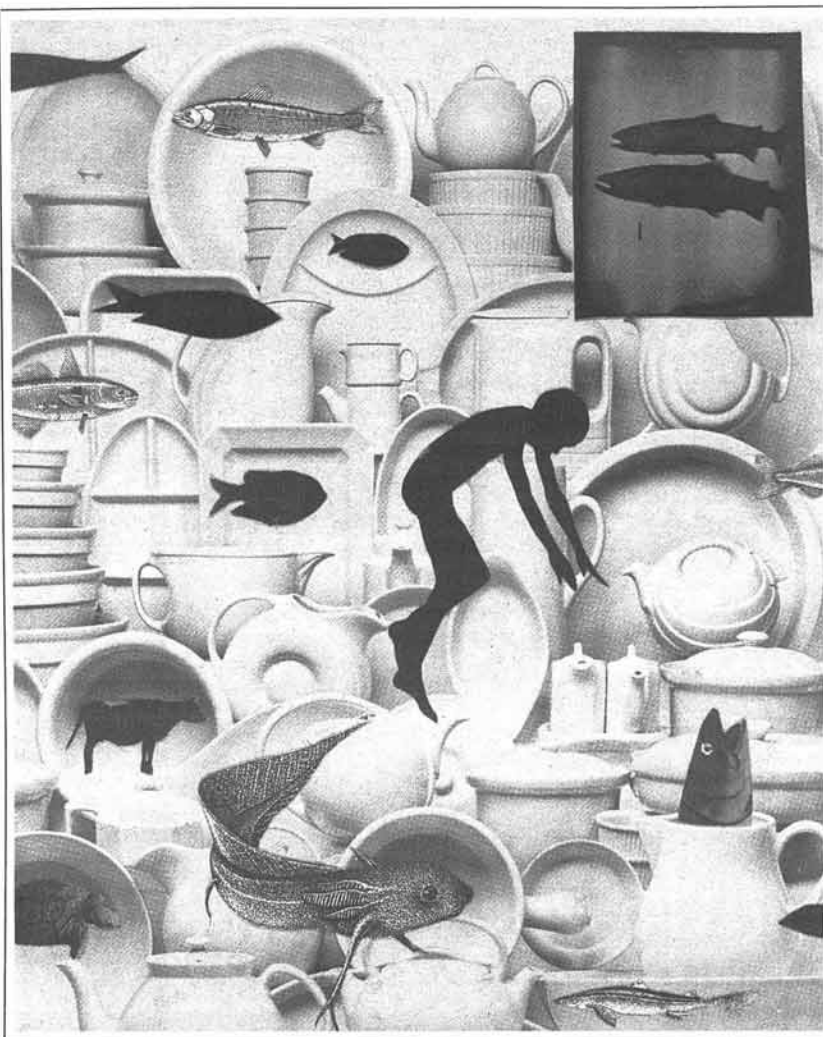


Illustration by Lissa Rovetch

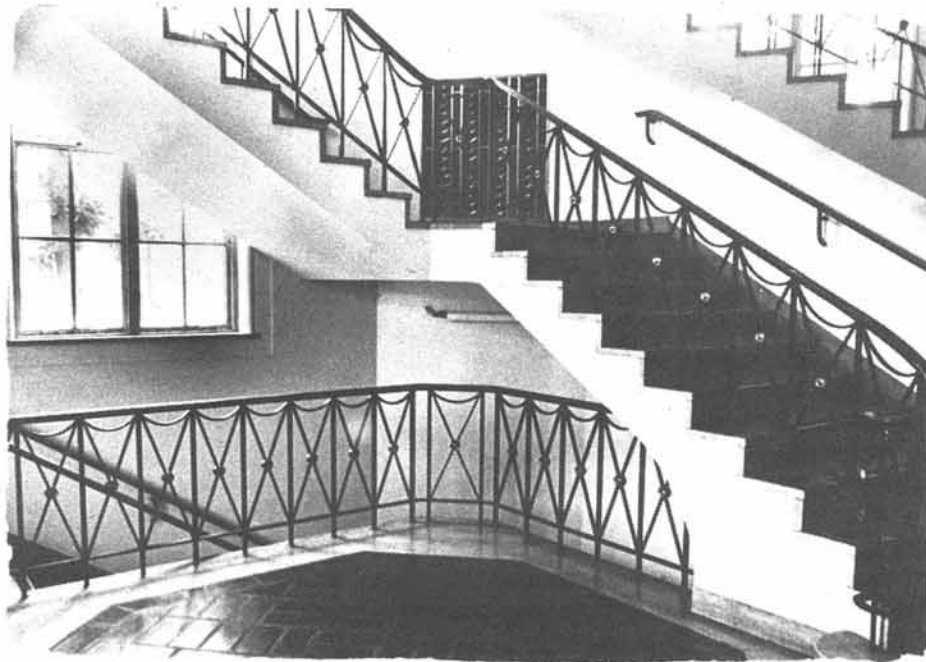
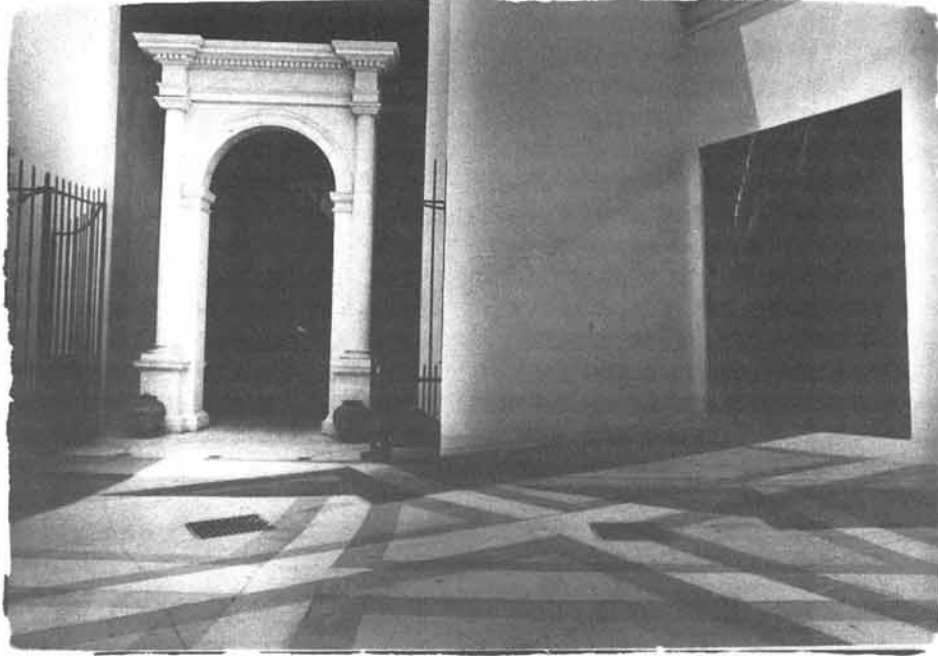
down to her chin. Her jaw is detached, mechanical. She bitches. Food is cold. Aunt sit there, Uncle don't drip on the floor. Pass the meat. I watch for turtles. I hear a motor-boat pass above. The sound is shrill and frightening. The fish scatter. The sound is like a saw, it whips at the surface, tearing and cutting the water. The water vibrates, the lake trembles and then is quiet. Clouds must have moved above, for the water darkens. I can't tell which way is up and for a moment I lose my sense of vertical. I can't see the fish.

Aunt chews slowly. Dessa passes the black bread around. The meat is finished. Cherries afterwards. And Sanka. The women clean the table. Don't go in the water for a half hour, Dessa tells the children, until your supper's digested. Dessa's always afraid that her grandchildren will cramp and then sink. Last summer a girl drowned. She didn't know how to breathe like the fish. Water filled her lungs until she sank to the bottom. Then one day she floated to the surface, blue and swollen. She floated in the lake quietly, untouched. The lake presented her to the surface, after sucking the air from her body, filling it with water, making her porous.

I think the turtles live under the lily pads. I suppose other things live there, too, other swimming

creatures who never poke their heads above the surface. After the rain falls, the lillies look fresh and white, but underneath they are dark and tangled. I swim to the left and see the lily roots. Up above, amongst the lily pads, there's a boat party. I hear their laughter. The boats tip and sway as the joke is told, as they slap their knees, as women exchange seats. The oars rest on the tautness of the surface, quickly dipping into it when the laughter rises. The guests all wear white clothes and hats. There are five boats, tied together. They pass drinks, another joke is told. I long to silently sneak beneath the boats, to create long gaps in the bottom of the boats so that they slowly sink and drown the boaters. But I can't swim there — I'd get tangled beneath the pads — the area is thick with growth, dark like the bottom of the sea.

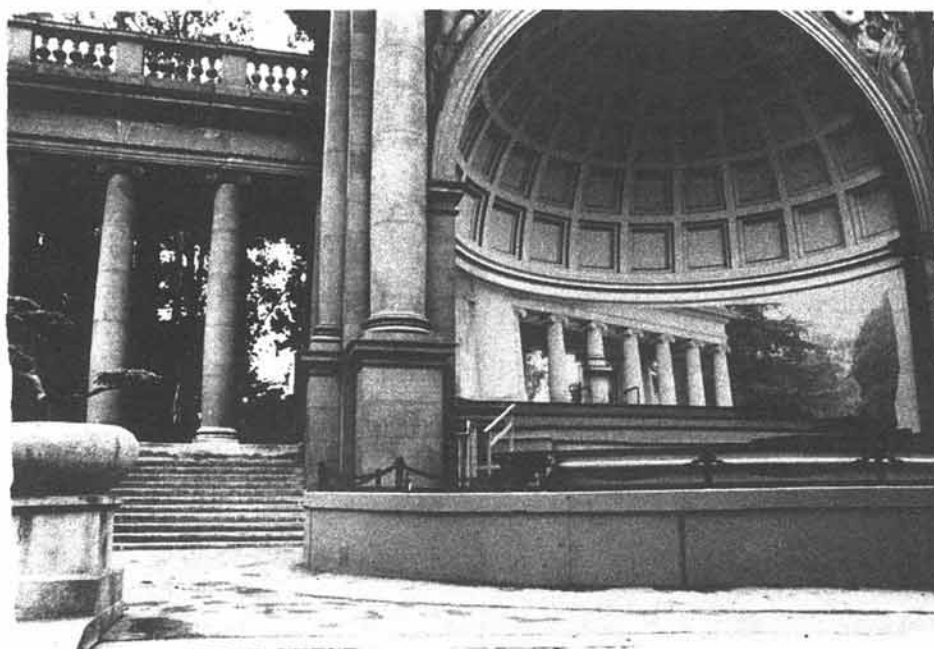
The sky brightens. The water is no longer black, but turns to shades of blue and violet. My feet suddenly feel lighter — my two legs feel as one. My body fuses, my shape becomes smooth, my extremities coalesce. My skin looks like white rubber. I begin to glide. I seem to swim faster in a sort of syncope. Uncle takes a nap, satisfied that he taught me how to dive into the drink today. Outside Dessa sits near the clothesline in her stained yellow dress, sweating under her nylons. Watching for turtles.



## PHOTOGRAPHY

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### SANDRA BARLOW



When I was a child I don't think I fully understood how I could see my side of, let's say a wall, and that it could exist in a separate, independent reality on the other side. As a photographer I can explore these relationships of perspective and the relativity of perception.

In this series I have photographed a structure or part of a structure and then rephotographed it from a shifted perspective. By various methods I then combined images of the "same" structure into one print. \* What emerges, of course, is a new dimension.

These photographs are printed small in size to prevent the viewer from attempting to accept what they are seeing as real, and to remind them that our perceptions are just that.

Sandra Barlow

\* Same is a relative term. Philosophical theory dictates that nothing can ever be the same twice.



# MOM & MARKET POP'S

## Dawn To Dark

The corner store is a venerable urban institution. Foot traffic beats a path to the market day after day. Buy whatever you ran out of last night or need tomorrow. A loaf of bread, a jug of milk. Got to get a paper, have a smoke, a sweet, a cold soda. Here's a place to duck in from out of the rain. Walk in the door and somebody knows your face, maybe even your name. From dawn to sunset, the proprietors of these first aid stations are on duty. Some give credit, other's won't. It's a risky business, but there are rewards if your interest in people borders on an anthropological passion.

Text by Marianne Goldsmith  
Photographs by Jerri Strid

James and Xanthippe Johns own and operate Hellas Imported Foods. This modest establishment sells fresh baked apple pies and Mediterranean specialties like spanakopeta, baklava, grape leaves, Bulgarian and Roumanian feta cheese, olives and Retsina.

Mr. and Mrs. Johns are friendly and warm. They come from Greece, and their business has supported a family of five over the years. More from Jimmy:

"I've been in this kind of business since age 14. I work with my wife and my mother-in-law. Many years ago, we had a restaurant in the Sunset district. Now we have this store for thirteen years, and we have a bakery in the mission. I do all the baking, every day. I enjoy my work, and my customers. We have all kinds of people come in here. International fresh food is what they want. We sell lots of fresh orange juice. We squeeze it ourselves.

"Somebody had a fight outside our store. They broke a window. Now we have to fix it. I tell you, if you don't love your friend with all his faults, then you're not going to have any friends at all.

"I have a lot to say about life. I think in this country we chase the dollar. The dollar has too much power. I could be the poorest guy, but I'm the happiest. Under the canopy of heaven, all people are equal."

"Here's a place to duck in from out of the rain."



A.M.A. Wonderful Market 330 Ellis (near Hyde), San Francisco

A.M.A. wonderful Market is located in the Tenderloin District, across the street from the Senator Hotel. The store is open from 6:30 a.m. until 2 a.m. The shelves are stocked with everything from staples to diapers to inexpensive jogging suits and kitchen items. An Egyptian couple owns the store. The missus says:

"My customers call me 'Ama,' but that's really the name of the store — A.M.A. We kept the name when we took over the store seven years ago. My husband and I run it together; sometimes my brother helps out too. We like working here; we make a living. We care for each other. This is a safe neighborhood for us, because the people who live here, they watch out for you. We haven't had any trouble. Most of the people come in every day. I know most of them. We have all kinds of customers — black, white, Cambodian people, Arab, older people. Most of them come in to shop at night, after work. We're open seven days a week — that's why I think I look 100 years old. One thing I don't sell — lottery tickets. I don't like that idea, because to me it makes people spend all their money on lottery tickets. They may think they will win more money, but if they don't then they lose it all. They might have to end up stealing food from a store. That cuts into living expenses.

Here's Harvey's Place, a popular hangout for bicycle messengers on their South of Market routes. Harvey's sells groceries to business people in the area, construction workers and residents of nearby hotels. Half of the store is a coffee shop with a long pink counter where you can get a cup of coffee, breakfast plates, an egg roll or corn dog at very reasonable prices. The most popular items sold at Harvey's are lottery tickets.

Says Harvey: "I've been a grocer in this neighborhood since 1972. I treat all my customers fair and square. I know most of the people around here. I probably get 1,000 people a day in here and I know most of them by name. I like to see people happy. When they come into my store grouchy, I try to cheer them up. I help if I can. I give credit when my customers run out of money. They always pay me back. I don't want them to go hungry. There's no banks around here, so sometimes I cash checks. It's part of the service. You know, I don't allow anyone making trouble in my place. If somebody starts acting up, using foul language, I make them go outside. I always say 'hello' and 'good morning' to my customers. If I'm in a bad mood, I don't take it out on them. I give them a smile. They all know me. They all call me Harvey."



Harvey's Place 330 Fifth Street, San Francisco

"The corner store is a venerable urban institution."

Presenting — The Rosenberg Deli, in the Castro/Duboce triangle district. They sell cold cuts and salads at the deli counter, newspapers and periodicals and the usual grocery fare. Some of the clerks are bi-lingual and the clientele has changed over the years. George Coffman, part owner, explains:

"My partner and I have been in business in this area for 12 years. We've seen changes. Of course, this has been a store since the 1890s. It was a German neighborhood long ago. We still have German customers, even young ones now. We carry German magazines for them. Actually, the store has had many owners of different nationalities. Just the other day a young man



Rosenberg Deli 276 Noe St., San Francisco

— Chinese-American — came in to shop. He told me he remembered this place because when he was little, his parents owned it.

In the past five years, I've seen the neighborhood really change. Rents used to be lower and there was a different mix of people: gays, indigent people, and 'post-flower children.' Now property values have gone up and others like to call the new residents 'yuppies.' I think that's a manufactured term. These people are hoping for career advancement. I used to sell more natural food items in the store, like whole wheat breads. My new customers want Hostess Twinkies. They have to have their 'twinkie fix' because that's what they were raised on.

This store is open 365 days a year. I'm the change-maker for people who use the laundromat next door, and anyone who needs change for the Muni or for parking meters. I'm friendly with all the merchants in the area. When I run out of paper bags, I can always get extras from Jake, who has a store down the street. The Eureka Valley Market, across the block helped us get started in business; now they supply us with produce.

I love my business. The mortgage is high, but I know this store wouldn't work anywhere else. We're here, and we're doing what we want to do. We're lucky to be here.

"Some give credit, others won't."

Speedy's is located at the crest of Telegraph Hill, overlooking the water and the span of the Bay Bridge. Inside the store hangs a 1926 photo mural of the original family owners, the Spediacci's, who made Speedy's a landmark in the city's history. Today, the front door is an informal bulletin board for locals. The butcher case displays shrimp, pate and filet mignon; produce bins offer lettuce, endive and fresh fruits, and a floor-to-ceiling wine cellar features vintage labels for discerning tastes. Co-owner Marshall Dong and his brother keep the place in great shape, and they seem to have no trouble keeping their customers happy.

"Before we opened this store, my brother Art and I both worked here as clerks. I had to leave when I got drafted, but Art stayed on. He sort of became a fixture in the place until one day, the owner offered to sell the store to him.

"The people who come here are faithful customers. We give them good service. Sometimes I help them out with Chinese recipes. If we don't have all the right ingredients for a dish, I send the customer to Chinatown. People use the store for deliveries when they're not home. UPS delivers here all the time. We've even had to let the movers into an apartment. All kinds of people shop here — Charles McCabe, Melvin Belli, Mimi Farina are former customers, and now we have Supervisor Nancy Walker, Frances Moffat, the writer, and a drummer for the Tubes. Speedy's has been filmed a couple of times — last movie was Gene Wilder, who bought groceries during *Woman in Red*.

"Art is the butcher now. We've both been in the business since we were young. Our parents had a store on Nob Hill and we both worked there. This place goes way back. Speedy (Pete), the son of the original owner is alive and well and living in Sonoma.



Speedy's New Union Grocery 301 Union Street, San Francisco

"Oh, oh," said Sally.

"I see something.

Something for Baby Sally.  
Something for Dick and Jane,  
Mother and Father."



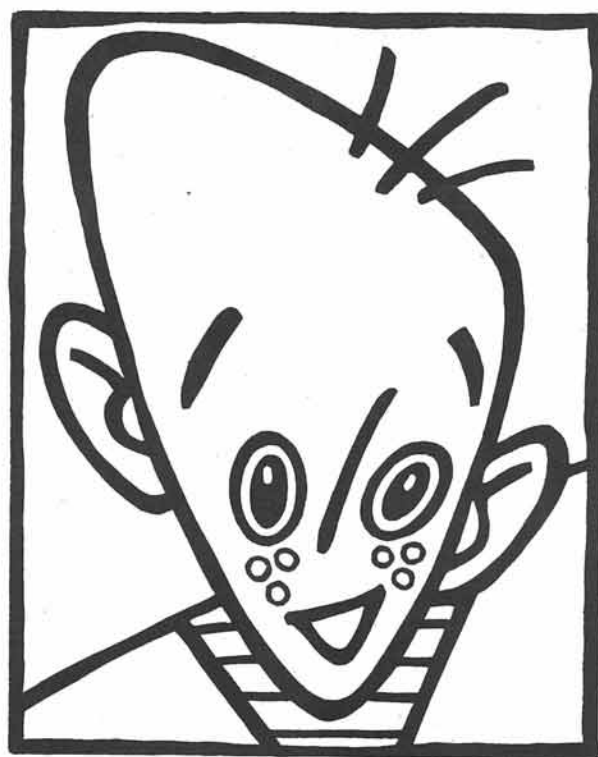
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# Surveying the Land



Photo: Kevin Gibson

Phyllis Shafer/GRINDER, 1985/72" x 90"

by Rebecca Solnit

Midway through the dark woods of this decade, the figurative neo-expressionism trend seems to be losing ground; among the many kinds of art springing up to take its place is landscape. Whether this represents a new crop of artists interested in the land and its meanings or a new trend in curating shows isn't what seems most important. Switching from looking at figurative painting to gazing upon landscapes is like stepping out of a crowded party into a cool and solitary garden.



The Smith Andersen Gallery's exhibition of Bruce Conner's 1978 punk photographs reminded me how stagnant the mock rural culture of the late seventies — all macrame and country rock — once seemed, what an exhilarating thing the sudden surge of high-speed, pessimistic urban mania was, how cool all the big sloppy angst-filled personal painting that followed in its wake was. Time, however, has staled its charms. Figurative painting is like a girl who never stops talking about herself. "Man, we like to say, is the measure of all things," wrote Aldous Huxley in his essay *Landscape Painting as a Vision Inducing Art*, but "for Monet . . . water lilies were the measure of water lilies, and so he painted them." In the landscape artist's work, "humanity loses its importance, even disappears completely. Instead of men and women playing their fantastic tricks before high heaven, we are asked to consider the lilies, to meditate on the unearthly beauty of 'mere things' . . ."

Reality has of late been considered to be urban and thereby human; nonhuman entities and environments, to be anachronistic. Perhaps I don't agree with this assessment because I spend a lot of time seeking out uninhabited landscapes, and from the top of a big hill, what seemed to be development with a few pockets of country is revealed to be country with a few pockets of development. The land, nature, is still very nearly ubiquitous, the difference is that we can no longer trust in it being eternal and immutable too. At one time, scientists — and critics such as Kenneth Clark — suggested the land was no longer relevant. More recent thinking suggests it is intensely so, as burning an issue as nuclear war. We are far more deeply interfused with the environment than was previously believed, for if the rain forests or the oceans go, so do we.

The whole world is essentially landscape, with interruptions of cityscape and seascape, and its constituent elements retain a powerful grip on the mind. A horizontal line on a sheet of paper is enough to evoke a horizon, and with it, land and sky and distance. Much abstract painting, from Kandinsky to Rothko, depends on the viewer's response to suggestions of space, distance and atmosphere — the elements of landscape — for its transporting spirituality and its impact. Even more than figurative painting, landscape brings back illusion and perspective, those two bugaboos

of modernism.

The Richmond Art Center's New Romantics exhibit (through March 27), which contained seven kinds of scenes by seven local painters, left me feeling dizzy from all the tilting, shifting, lurching perspectives and fatigued from the range of pictorial illusion. Wade Hoefer's works, painted in dusty, low-key colors on gritty canvas stretched over tree branches, are the most utterly alien landscapes I've ever seen; they radiated a sense of that transcendental indifference and remoteness, that embracing of the inhuman, which eastern religions strive for. Rather than pull you into an imaginary realm, Phyllis Shafer's overwhelming paintings of succulents loom out as though they're going to topple onto you. Depicting a particularly savage and exuberant kind of nature, the paintings are each dominated by a spike-encrusted biomechanical succulent, part toy, part weapon, part plant, like an acid rain mutation. Horrendous chartreuses and glaring oranges make them particularly intense — and the viewer particularly queasy. (Shafer also has work on display at Works/San Jose through March 29 and at Slant Gallery in Sacramento. Hoefer's work is on exhibit at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill through April 11.) Shafer and Hoefer have the good fortune to be represented by excellent examples of their work, which was not the case with the other artists, particularly Chris Brown and Pat Steir. Brown, a UC Berkeley professor whose recent projects include an almost two-hundred-foot-long panorama of forest scenes, was represented by some inconsistent older work. Steir's work is more impressive in her current exhibit of wave formations at Fuller Goldeen Gallery (through April 5).

The most impressive paintings I've

seen in a very long time are Margaret Thomas's, at Jeremy Stone. In her hands, budding and fruit-laden branches seen against windy skies become dionysian incarnations of energy. The thick, luscious brush strokes wiggle and squirm like Marilyn Monroe's bottom and radiate outward like heat waves; the branches look as though they're pumping with sap, the buds bursting ecstatically. This is the way a devotee of a fertility cult might see the Goddess's sacred orchard. These paintings are so powerful that if you took your clothes off and fully exposed yourself to them, they'd probably cure or transmute you.

More problematic paintings by Robin Winters and Robert Rasely were shown at, respectively, Fuller Goldeen and Charles Campbell Galleries. A conceptual artist who had apparently recently returned to traditional media, Winters makes paintings that are primarily notable for their stylistic inconsistencies; there were jokes, visual quotes from Hunderwasser, neat lichenlike textures, pyramids, faces. . . . Rasely's watercolor miniatures included the kind of eccentric detail that often goes unnoticed in the background of Bosch's paintings; oddity, however, is not enough. Like Fuller Goldeen, Charles Campbell Gallery is following a landscape show with a landscape show; Mary Robertson's work there depicts modern pastoral idylls — people vacationing along rivers and at the beach.

Graystone Gallery is showing beautiful color drawings of landscapes by Louis Labrie through April 12; Bank of America's Plaza Gallery has an exhibit of Miriam Smith's "Spirits of Oceania" series of black and white landscapes. Even traditional landscape, painted from life and more or less resembling it, has

made an appearance: Ann Hogle has lyrical renditions of Marin hillsides at William Sawyer Gallery through April 4 and Louis Siegfriest (a member of the Six, a Bay Area landscape painting group of the 1920s) has his eighty-seventh birthday exhibition at Triangle Gallery through March 29. For most of these painters, however, landscape seems to represent a strategy for exploring the range of painterly effects while avoiding the Scylla of figuration and the Charybdis of abstraction. In some, the subject matter is a vehicle for a personal symbolism or an evocation of states of being; most of these paintings conveyed a presence, an atmosphere, even a sense of a world. The primal and powerful entities once thought to inhabit springs, trees, hills, stones and other natural phenomena are invoked in these works. As my esteemed colleague Mark Van Proyen wrote in regard to Margaret Thomas's work, "Mainstream postmodernism, as well as the most recent phases of modernism, may have made a profound mistake when it identified the idea of being with consciousness (I think, I see, therefore I am) rather than embracing the more time-honored notion of being as a manifestation of omnipresent, primordial vitality. . . ."

For reasons of space and cohesiveness, I have concentrated on paintings of landscape. One photographic exhibition, "With the Land," at Sonoma State University's Art Gallery through April 20 (in Rohnert Park) deserves mention in this context. Co-curator Ellen Manchester says of this exhibit, which includes hundreds of works by everyone from Wynn Bullock to Judith Golden to Richard Misrach, "'With the Land' looks at the varied ways in which we seek to understand our relationship to the world around us and in particular to the natural environment which represents for many of us the more complex and enduring values of our experience. The photographs in this exhibition address a broad spectrum of issues on individual and cultural identities as manifested in our social interaction with the natural landscape. Go see it." It's worth the very beautiful drive north. And don't overlook Avedon's "In the American West" at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Edward Curtis's turn-of-the-century portraits of Indians at Robert Koch Gallery or "The New Painting: Impressionism" at the DeYoung. Not to mention the California folk art exhibit and the "Colorado Desert Photographs" by Pamela Robertson at the Oakland Museum.



Pat Steir/UNTITLED, 1985/60" x 173"

Photo: Bachmann, NY

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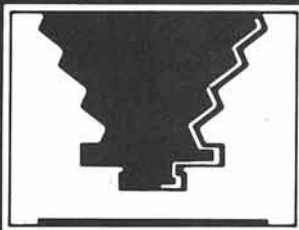
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## PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Among recently noted and enjoyed performances was Helen Shumaker in Philip Dimitri Galas' "Mona Rogers in person." Mona is a comic/tragic burlesque queen on the edge of insanity. The performance will be at Climate Gallery through the first week in April.

Simply Magic at the Marines' Memorial Theatre was a highly entertaining professional show that simply dazzled us. Jeff McBride, a 'new wave illusionist' of international stature, fused his energetic prestidigitations with Kabuki theatre, martial arts, quick change, mime and mask. Others in the show, Frank Olivier, Scott Cervine, Tina Lenert, and Triplevision, were equally noteworthy with their solid acts.

Turning to international cuisine for a moment the Rose Cafe on O'Farrell Street near Larkin offers a Vietnamese specialty — 'seven-way beef,' i.e. served in seven different ways, strictly non-vegetarian. Bring a friend or two.

Photo by Arnold Iger



Performance artist Winston Tong has recently returned from Europe where he has been living and working for several years. He became well known for his performance *Bound Feet* for which he won an "Obie" and as a songwriter and lead vocalist of the band Tuxedomoon. We saw Winston at Climate in February in his performance *A Spy in the House of Love* inspired by the book of the same title by Anais Nin. The dualities of character are expressed beautifully throughout *Spy*. A good balance and interaction with film and recorded sound, a simple yet effectively used set and masterful puppetry were elements in this fine performance. In speaking to Winston recently we learned of the beginnings of his performance career in the streets of San Francisco; face painted white, a black tuxedo, holding in his arms his alter ego, a female puppet in a white gown and also with a white face. He told of meeting Laurie Anderson in Germany where she was performing in a white satin suit, her long hair in a bundle like Liv Ullman in *Cries and Whispers*. He offered to cut her hair short and at first she resisted, eventually giving in though to that 'boyish' look. He taught her how to cut it herself but the last time they spoke she said

she found it difficult to cut around the ears to make it comfortable when speaking on the telephone which she does a lot of. When asked to analyze his work he referred to Robert Wilson's recent statement on P.B.S. that "It's not the

responsibility of the artist to explain about his or her work."

He told the story of his one meeting with Joseph Beuys at his studio in Germany. "I went with a friend who's a photographer — she was doing photos of him at that time. Beuys was getting ready for a museum show and was cataloguing his work — he was very busy. I went to his work table which was covered with stuff and made a small collage which I gave to him. We hadn't said two words to each other in all the time I was there but when I was getting ready to leave Beuys embraced me and kissed me on the mouth. My friend told me later that he had never done that before. So I felt that I had been blessed; 'the kiss of Julius' sort of thing."

Since leaving Tuxedomoon, Winston has released a new album entitled "Theoretically Chinese" on the Crepuscule label. On that he says: "I try to open the sound up, it's something that I always wanted to make, something more positive. You might call it more 'pop'. I worked with a lot of English musicians and an English producer Alan Rankin. A very different direction. I was a little afraid and so was the record company. We weren't supporting that negative image anymore so we wondered if we'd lose all the old fans. But I had a feeling we wouldn't because I can trace my own song writing history throughout the history of Tuxedomoon. From the beginning I was with them, it's the same kind of material that's on this album. It's just produced differently." About his split from Tuxedomoon he said, "It's been slowly happening over the last couple of years. The first thing was their move to Europe. I was already working there myself with Bruce (Bruce Geduldig, Tong's performance partner), coming back and forth every few months. I never really wanted to take all my bags there and dump myself in a foreign country with no real future in my hand just waiting for jobs to come up. I didn't like that at all." And about his return to San Francisco he said: "Of course, you leave your heart here, that sort of thing. After a few years in Europe I realized that I was an American in my thinking and I understood why America is the way it is and why the old world is called the old and the new the new.



It's much slower there; it's harder to get things moving. Although there is a much greater grace to things because of history and art."

Winston is now working on a new performance work entitled *Like The Others* which is based on

One has to wonder about the state of DV8, as it seems to have been in a "pre-construction" mode for ages. First it was to open at New Year's, then February, now I hear it is slated for spring. The delay is odd, what with Dr. Winkie earning

# SQUARE HOLES

his meeting Joseph Beuys. This piece will be presented at the Magic Theatre in July.

This just in: we attended the work in progress of "Like The Others" at Climate Gallery this evening and witnessed an unfortunate accident of art imitating life. Tong dropped in a black cloth looking very much the role of 'le spectre de la mort' seemed to misjudge as he lunged his stiletto into the arm of a Marat-like-Beuys played by Geduldig. A dramatic ending to say the least. We wish them a swift recovery — physically and psychically.

**Arnold Iger/Paul Kwan**

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## GIRL TALK

... is about more than martinis. The city is a buzz with talk of a David Bowie appearance which would coincide with the world premiere of "Absolute Beginners" on March 30th at the Palace of Fine Arts. The film, by Julien Temple also starring Ray Davies and Sade, is about London youth in the late 1950s. Its showing will be the last



Photograph by Heather McCollum

in the S.F. International Film Festival's series and will be followed by "Music and munchies" at Club DV8.

dough with his "computer friendly" badge" (a yes/no piece of blinking jewelry), and his supposed big East Coast financial backing. DV8 sure does hail to an opulent bunch. I swear I saw a Rolls or two and even a stretch-limo at the party in honor of Keith Haring. That party was one of those you come away from with a hair-ache from all the effort to stand-out. Fashion competition was fierce — wigs, bangs, turbanesque hats, 60s retro neo-psychedelic look, Kitty singing and my hairdresser, Charles, on stage go-go dancing.

A fond farewell to Lisa Handy, one of the main stylists with FAD, who is off to seek broader fame and fortune. Another departee is Alberto De Meneses, the best bald hairdresser in town — seems like a contradiction doesn't it?

The last time I happened to be in New York, I ran into Dahlen, who was an all too frequent contributor to Noh Club fashion shows. Of course, he's knocking the city's socks off with his spectacular photography.

Congratulations to Rebecca Kmiec and Roberto Robeldo for winning for the second year in a row Focus Magazine's Golden Sheers Awards. Holly and Camille of HolCam tell me a Haight Street storefront may lurk in their future and then there is the opportunity to design wardrobes for an upcoming film produced by the Berkeley company that made Amadeus. Business is on the up and up for those gals.

## MR. NITELIFE

**Dear Readers,**

Is anyone there? Are you dry? I am a Survivor. The holidays took us all like a storm, the storms were no holiday... and here we are into March... already... ALL READY... Saw everybody from Nancy Reagan (do you like her in a cameo of the video Stop The Madness?) to the Pointer Sisters, to Patsy Cline. Will she achieve superstardom via People Magazine?... Will Sheila E. answer our invitation to come to a party for her?... These are the kinds of questions I muddled over on those raining days... Then

I have heard it told that Bernard Detrier's Zig Zag party of early February was a refreshing change to an otherwise "rapidly approaching boring" club scene. The 5th and Folsom storefront he utilized was new to most. Love Club with Debbie, Larry and Brian was a crowd pleaser. They will next go public on April 18th at Nightbreak.

The Next Club, dead on most occasions, is actually a good bet on Sunday nights when DJ St. Samm takes over the control box. DNA, despite its feeling of regularity, rises above the rest as the most reliably fun club evening. 181 is having some rough times. Kevin's liquor license is under temporary suspension, so it's a bring your own bottle scene which is, as Jack Perkins pointed out, a money saver.

ReSearch threw a small private party recently to celebrate the opening of its new storefront office on Grant. Andrea and Vale are pleased with their black and gray space that is itself a big leap for them. It has been some years of struggle.

When next you find yourself South of Market, do go see Stuart Cameron Vance's Etch a Sketch art at ATA — Artists Television Access (old Martin Weber Studio.) Patty Davidson's art books store and gallery, Media, across Ninth St. from Nine is also well-worth a visit. Footwork Studio, 22nd and Mission, is displaying fashion accessories in its gallery by Margie Mar Design, Lory Spencer Adornments and PVU.

As for Martini talk, a friend of mine recently perfected the means for making the best martini. Good ingredients and the right amount of Vermouth are the keys to success. My friend only coats the ice with Vermouth, whereas the bartender at the Persian Aub Zam Zam room, by far the best martini maker in town, adds it last.

And then there is Joan Collins, who on Dynasty the other night (not a show I admit to watching), simply dipped the swizzle stick in it. One thing is for certain, martinis, "the ol' truth serum" as I like to refer to them, warm-up a party faster than anything else. The aftereffects, on the other hand, are quite another consideration. Remember my motto "loose lips bring hot tips."

**Martine E. Blase**

came a break in the weather and a break from one of my busiest periods... and I found myself shipwrecked in the South of Market... Thinking perhaps I had become too conservative of late, I took a poll from passerbys and asked the question: What's in?? and What's out??? And here are some of the responses I received... Alissa, set designer says in are Thai Food and The Twilight Zone and what's out are Sushi and jails and procreation... Ian Zorn the original Punk Rocker from Berlin says Phone Sex is in (Didn't anyone else say that??) and tapioa



is in!! and Parking Tickets are out!!! Actions are louder than words for the Fabulous Steven Brown who says San Francisco is out...and moved to Manhattan...definitely IN. MaryAnn Carter celebrity bartendress from St. Helena claims intergalactic sex and opium dens are in, Nutrasweet and Time are OUT... Elecktra Lace, actress and SOMA personality lists of ins includes: Stoly



martinis, red/black, love and friendship, dressing up, and out are: whores, dinks, one-nite-stands, pretense, prejudice, and paisley. Her friend DeDe DeHaviland, bartender claims that theatrical video technology and the fight for unlimited awareness and understanding are in, while out are bigotry and heteros' needs for fads and trends...and Maxine, lead singer for Typhoon, part-time coat check and full-time human being swears that all girl bands are IN along with checking your gloves and panties at cool clubs and definitely out is white lipstick, dayglow dressing, and

golf...another bartender Michael Bartkus informed me that Black Death, and The Cult, good friends, money, the ocean, and good food and music are IN...He adds jerks, the economy and violence are out...The nighttime was again upon me and I decided to make my rounds to the clubs...First I must report the changes at Oasis which include a retractable roof, the bands now perform outside...and swimming in their pool resumes in April - 7 days a week...The Oasis remains IN...Other changes at 181 Club...now you bring your own liquor...They remain open after hours, 18 and older welcome...Squids also making waves in Civic Center...they've opened a dance club connected to the restaurant reminiscent of the early Go-Go era (no cover charge) There is an emphasis on Neo-Psychedelia artwork by artist James Hunter...Dance to your request, or sit at the bar and choose a tune from city's best juke box...OTHER CHANGES...Lights out at Club Lights??...they've switched their format to Jazz...Is Club Nine closing soon???...Also overheard at Billboard "Club DNA is like the movie Liquid Sky" which was IN...Was going to talk about the Grammys this year...Mick Jagger sums it up for me "It doesn't really mean much anymore, the same people always win...The Lionel Ritchies and Michael Jacksons and the other singers are

the only ones who stand a chance"... 'Nuf said...My list of winners would include Fine Young Cannibals, Big Audio Dynamite, The Cult, Bronski Beat, Art of Noise, The Cure, Tones on Tail, Simple Minds, and Siouxsie & the Banshees...Aren't they IN? What about my favorite movies...Will

they stand a chance against the Pop Favorites...We'll see if "Sweet Dreams" can win points with the Academy this year...Marc Huestis (Whatever Happened To Susan Jane?) working earnestly on new film...which promises to be a huge hit...a follow-up to Sunset Boulevard...of sorts...Marc is

sure that Geraldine Page will get the Oscar, for her lifetime achievements on top of her new film "Return to Bountiful"...Until the next issue...stay tuned for the next exciting episode of "Nites of my Life"...yours, in a tuxedo,... Mr. Nitelife.

Raoul Thomas

# 松竹梅

## JAPANESE NEW MUSIC

The Asian Art Museum deserves credit for shaking up its usually staid image and seeking out a new audience with its Modern Japanese Composers series. A look about the audience at one of this series' free Sunday night concerts proved the outreach to be a stunning success. The Trustee's Auditorium at the museum was close to filled with a charmingly eclectic audience of Asian culture devotees, fervent music lovers, the curious and the uninitiated. Somehow it seemed quite healthy to be in such a mix of ages, incomes and inclinations.

The evening's program was eclectic in its own right. The program ranged from compositions of a more traditionally western style for flute, violin, viola and violoncello to a starkly dramatic piece played entirely on the small,

simple ryuteki--the traditional bamboo flute.

The finale, *Elegie, Op. 64*, by Maki Ishii, was the most visually exciting piece with its percussionists who went through nothing less than calisthenics while playing the various wind chimes, gongs, bells and sticks. The program notes fill in that the piece was based on an episode from the story *Heike Monogatari* (12th-14th century) about a female dancer and singer who was loved and cared for by an autocrat. But he soon lost his power and died and her luck ended. Her heart was broken and for the next 21 years she lived as a nun. *Elegie* evokes the spirit of a woman's poetic feeling and the transiency of life.

Linden Chubin, who is the outreach coordinator at the

museum, commented that the series is about "the connection between West and East but also about the connection between music and literature." The connection to literature is apparent in looking at the piece's titles such as "From Far Beyond the Chrysanthemums and November Fog", by Toru Takemitsu, which is a piece based on a Japanese poem.

This year's performances are concluded but the program is to be an on-going annual series. Another event to watch for at the Asian Art Museum is *Evening of Contemporary Asian American Performing Arts* on May 9. The evening will include the multi-media theatre piece *The Tale of Q* by Paul Kwan and Arnold Iger as well as music and dance.

R. Biggs



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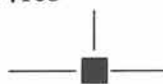
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