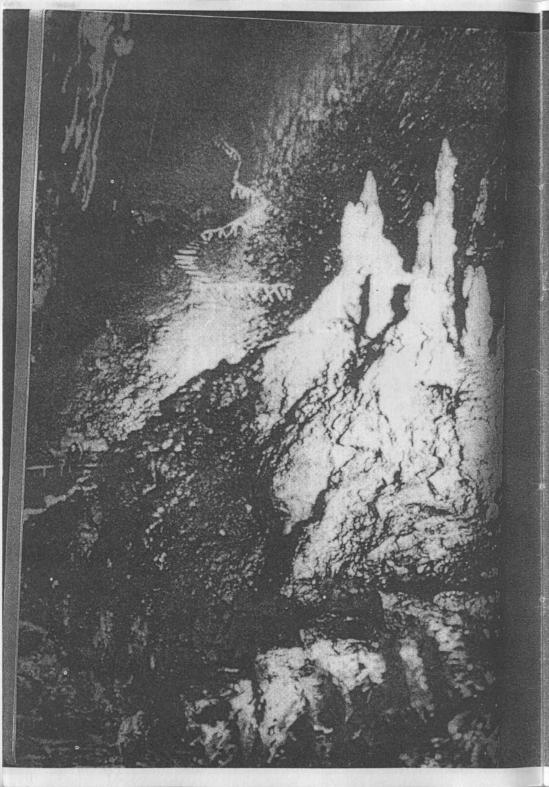
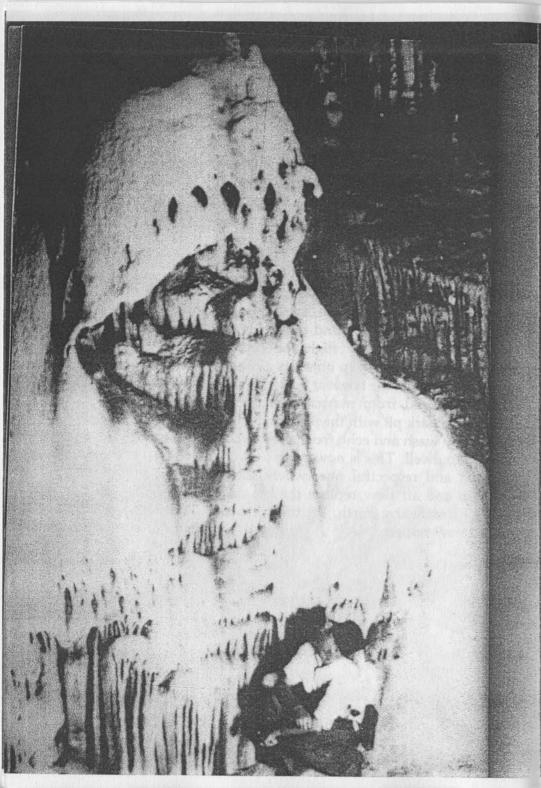
## PLATO'S CAVE ROTHKO'S CHAPEL LINCOLN'S PROFILE

MIKE KELLEY



YES, this is a cave where it does seem natural and proper to eulogize—it being underground, like a crypt. So, it is right, then, to dwell upon the deaths of those above. But somber and deathlike thoughts need not hold total mastery over this place. The poetic names of the locales surrounding it, some even descriplive of spots favored by suicides, bring respite to the worried mind. This free and easy poetic flow of the picturesque is a balm to the forced thoughts of the afterlife and to the terrors and misgivings which accompany them. The airy flight of emotion which comes from pairing word to object is a more beautiful and apt analogy for the release, the unbridled ecstasy, of soul unfettered from master flesh. Let the fancy roam. Fill the dark pit with the resonances of color and poetry. They wash and echo from zones where despair once used to dwell. This is now a celebration! Though a subdued and respectful one, where the sounds of water drip and air flow replace the brazen and loud hilarity of unreflexive mirth. Let the color and silence sink in. Show respect.



The color sinks in and spreads. Even one thread allowed to slip into the puddle opens the floodgates. The iniest of pinholes in the shield is more than adequate to let the wiggling-tailed mistake slip through and engender a whole race of mistakes. The horde is now descending with knives raised to bleed you... A fatal mistake. A stain of dishonor—the more you try to wash it out the more it dyes and reveals the whole wardrobe in its true color. Purple blush.

Mistake? ...NO! When the final act is committed it must be done in such a way that it is obvious that it was purposeful. Randomness of action drains it of its genius. The masterpiece issued posthumously from the body is the rich maroon color field—a heraldic banner the color of royalty. The exact configuration of this coat of arms is the subject of dispute however. Several families have disparate claims, none of which can be verified. There only exists an artist's conception.

How much of a conception is it? How much is based on direct observation and how much is simply fancy—beautiful in some lights, but when applied to the scientific method—distortionary. I can sit down and have a conception of any day, any year, anytime. Are there any photos to prove it? Any fossils? Anything?

I have a mental image of the configuration of Rothko's last emission and of the shape of the large puddle found under John Wilkes Booth's horse. I conceive of them as being the SAME shape. Or, I can conceive of one puddle as being the shape of the state of Virginia and the other as being the shape of the state of New



Hampshire. No police photos exist to disprove it. You can see now why photography is considered the enemy of the imagination. Two puddles-two conceptions. In one they are the same; in the other-in opposition. Virginia and New Hampshire lay on opposing sides of the Mason-Dixon line. I hate to drag up old rivalries, BUT...on this one I

have to side with the rebels...on aesthetic grounds.

What draws me to the Confederate flag? What about it makes it my choice of artists' conceptions of heraldic banners? Is it a love of pattern, of arrangement and decoration for their own sakes? Can it be that simple? Certainly I have no love for the South. I am a Northerner and have an ingrained feeling of superiority deposited in my genes by our victory long ago, despite the fact that I had nothing personally to do with it. Still, I feel it in my blood and the sight of the North slowly being polluted sickens me. Winter's stillness—snowflake is fucked up up up. The cool Northern climes cleanse. Now there is a new kind of still. It distills pure inbred evil. The foul-smelling mash sinks

down to the bottom. Fire brewed. The heat did it. Down here it is—in the annealing plant.

Hillbillies have finally made it to Hillbilly Heaven—the goldmine of armament factory work. Greaser, heathen, fuck your own sister. Drunkenly holler your rebel yell' out of the back of a racing pickup truck. Listen to your degraded form of music stolen from the very people you once fought to keep enslaved and laugh at the transcendant notes of a new music less coarse than that which is driven by alcohol. These are depicted in the mirror of society by a lineage stretching from incestuous idiot on one end to the 'Southern gentleman', a decayed foppish limpwrist, on the other. It drawls and crawls.

One cannot deny that there is a certain sense of freedom in these stereotypes. There is the freedom of the drunk and of the orphan, of the boy who gets away with murder while his parents duke it out. Rebellious freedom is always well designed. The Confederate uniform, like that of the Nazis, is more striking than that of the morally correct but stylishly inept competitor. Unfortunately, just causes tend not to put the proper amount of effort into their self-promotion. Wrong politics/right design.

The United States, cut from a map, divorced from its political associations, is a handsome shape. But keep the eyes straight ahead and lifted slightly up for south of the lateral line of bisection is the part which shouldn't be dwelled upon. This is the half composed of steaming, fetid bayou, the half that is subject to the

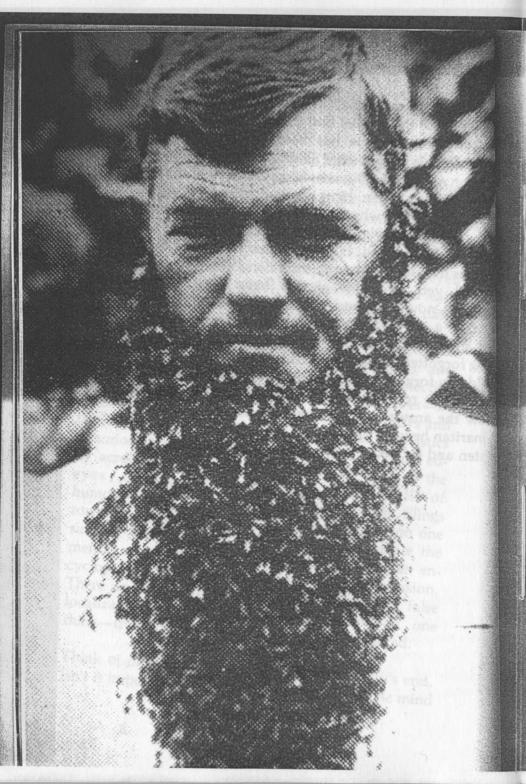
same obscene laws that govern the body below the belt line.

Puddle shaped. The one under John Wilkes Booth's horse is the puddle of incrimination. This horse has been ridden hard, is the horse of flight. It incriminates Booth of Southern stupidity. He was taken, took with false ideologies and sold a damaged bill of goods for this horse is one-eyed. Not the animal for escape. Halfblind. One side murky. Swampland. The one-eyed horse makes no right turns, that fork in the road leads only to despair and madness. Encircled by the damnatory puddle its one eye is fixed.

Ever-widening stain, wonderful and perturbing ambiguity. This amoebic rippling is a form of protective coloration. All things strive to protect themselves—so does ignorance. It uses clever machinations, ploys and tactics, camouflage techniques and mental gymnastics of a most inspired sort. The liquids whirl, spin and eddy acrobatically. This is the body seen through the eyes of Hans Hoffman-the push/pull of humors-fluid mechanics. Stare! Like iron filings toward a magnet the senses start to converge on one subject. One image strives to fill and dominate the mental viewscreen. No! Force it out and let an encyclopedia of images move in in a healthy succession. There are too many things that are ignored by false localization. Put not all your attention on one thing—that which is neurotically overemphasized.

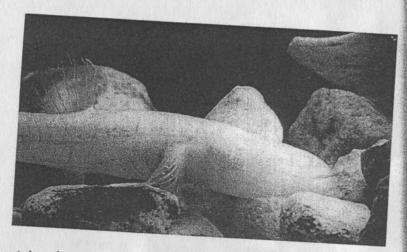
Think of one donut lying on the plate at party's end. Isn't it impossible to think of only this one? The mind

strives to encompass all the other donuts in the world-all of the donuts that HAVE been eaten. But not this one, this one has been ignored for some reason. People deny it what all other donuts have—the attention of hunger. Outcast! My eyes swell with tears of pity. What a crime. How can humanity be so cruel, so unfeeling? And why does no one but me notice the cruel and unjust exclusion? Why must I be the martyr? Why me? I'm SO full. Life is so hard. Whenever there is excess it is dumped on my shoulders. The job wasn't finished yet. Everyone should have been pulling together-now this, the awful expose, humanity is exposed as a mere collection of self-serving individuals. This shock of recognition is much more painful after being forgotten. Paradise in loss, Hell regained. Donut, could you forgive me if I let you lay? Could some other assume the role of the Good Samaritan? I already know the answer to that question. Wasn't the Good Samaritan he who was furthest in similarity to the one beaten and robbed? Aren't I the least similar to....



Donut, halo of batter, and one thing haloed is a painful sight. All the senses run from it. The wedding ring on its plate unfolds, in a flash of panic, eternity before the eyes. Bound to one image-endless binding images. Push me, pull me, tie me up and force me to look-a shotgun remedial reading course. Open the book and push the eyes from word to word. New things do need to be learned. Ah, freedom. Though the eye muscles are prodded in one direction, the mind runs in the other. Pain. Everything scrambles for cover and hides. And aren't the hidden bits more interesting anyway? Amidst the leafy green foliage, like Indians, their presence is felt but cannot be seen— only in tempting anticipatory flashes. What once was forced and painfully examined now swims freely in the murky Southern gumbo of life. Fish die when pulled from the water; when exposed, dimness struggles to stay alive.

Turn the rock over and expose the frail white thing to the light. OUCH! Not only is one eye missing—they are both missing, missing since birth, and painfully light sensitive, so sensitive they can distinguish the minutest shifts in value. That which posits positions itself at the top so this tonal scale is crowned with albino. The ascending scale of white supremacy—it ascends from the darker values to the lightest. Each of the four major color shifts has been paired with a corresponding bodily fluid: black with feces, red with blood, yellow with urine, and white with pus—a totem pole of the four races whose zenith is infection. These componants thrive in this wet environment; they are part of its totality, like juice is of the fruit. That which is damp strives for the wetness of the cave like words



strive for the wetness of the mouth... Arkansas blind cave fish, Florida blind cave fish, Texas blind cave fish, Louisiana blind cave fish—despite the regional differences of this confederacy they all issue from the cave.

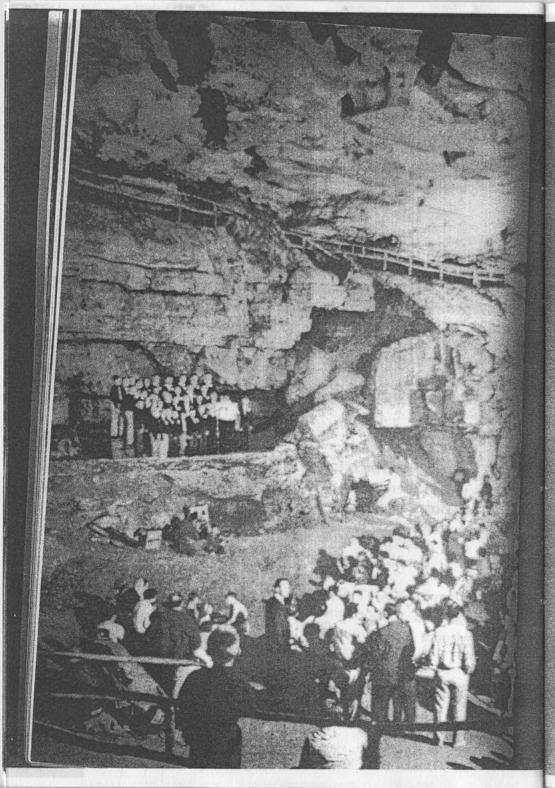
In the days before craft there still was order. The natural architecture of the cave was used by the keeper to house his swarm. He steps into the cave to collect, then comes out to exhibit his bee-beard—the ancient beard of wonders, the marbling chaos, the buzz of language. Each letter of the winged alphabet flits around the hive, clusters around the mouth.

BEHOLD. THAT WHICH IS AND THAT WHICH COMES FROM IT. The organ with its stain, and the mind with its drivel. HEAR. The word—the mouth and its dribble. It sprays in your direction.

Dribbling idiot. Babies can't keep food in their mouths.

They know enough to eat but not enough to swallow. What poetic justice to see a glutton die of starvation. Look at yourself, you are staring open-mouthed in wender. Shut your trap...and take off your bib.

No, not a baby, not a mincer a chaw of RED MAN. Tobacco juice is one of the rainbow juices of the lips. The word is TOBACCO. It blows out of the mouth cool and mentholated, or dribbles out harsh and straight. Harsh talker, I love your throaty tones. Don't mince words with me and don't smoke ladies cigarettes. Speak to me with the voice of Patricia Neal. Beautiful. Whispering waterfall of mineral water, come down in chunks—plangent. Not spoken at all, this is music. Mouth to flesh—speak a kiss. Listen, nothing is being said, there is no content, it is its cadences which touch the soul.



Some say music is the universal language. Rather, music is of the universe—a pre-sound which inhabits form. The first step toward real language is still very close to this music-the ur-language, the guttural moan—primal communication. Truer feelings cannot be conveyed than this. Emotions stir beyond the veil, beyond any attempt at translation and no matter what language is being spoken, actions are understood. If I hold my hand out with an object it is known immediately that it is a gift. Let me offer you now your first cigarette. I am patiently waiting for the day when you are expelled from the Vienna Boy's Choir, for the day your voice cracks. Let me help it along, my angel. Let me help it along. My favorite music is the downward glissando into maturity, the song of experience.

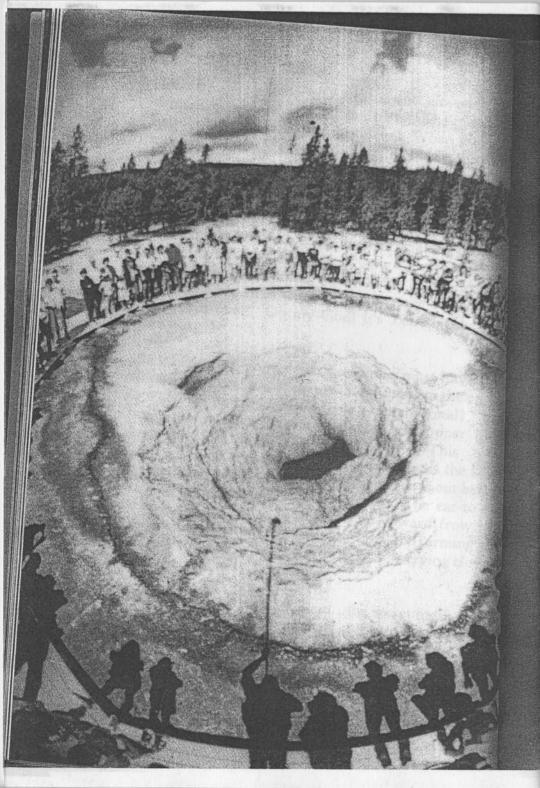
It's only a short road from first cigarette to throat cancer. Some children are standing around a broken pipe and crying. The pipe emits a wet, gurgling sound. Like Heidi in the Alps, they blubber, "Grandfather, Grandfather." They are listening to this aged sound and applying it to the oldest, wisest person they know—the recently deceased. Oh, the strange gutteral speech of the person without a larnyx; it is a burping esophagal language coming up directly from the pipe. Like spring water it is free from the contaminants of culture. The valve that controls the flow, missing, the stream flows in all directions at once—allencompassingly. A glorious sun of rainbow afro wigs.

Back to the roots. The most primitive people on earth correspondingly have the most primitive musical in-

strument. It is also the instrument closest to the simplest schematic of a human being. The instrument is only a tube, an alimentary canal. When played, it musters the image of an asshole being blown into and a moan escaping from the mouth. In our more complex culture, metaphors have to be more obvious, however. The player of this horn now must work it inserted down the seat of the pants of an assistant lying prostrate before him. What's the matter? Having prostrate problems buddy? Haw haw! Now the meaning's obvious. Now the meaning's as obvious as the tuba blat which accompanies the overweight stage comedian as she bends over. "Oh my God! It's Totie Fields! Haw haw!"

Sick of it yet? Things that are funny must have their limits, then one starts, is forced, to question their sanity. "Is this much attention to one topic normal?," you say. the muscles in the forehead and upper back tighten, the sweat begins to roll, "This must stop...NOW!" When tired of the music pass the knife across the throat of the horn. Then air hisses out before it reaches its destination—passes out. The ear-to-ear throat smile goes well with the downward frown of death. Upward arc meets downward arc forming the eternal circle. The happy/sad circle. The crying clown. The silent mime.

The audience hisses the villian...the secret has been let out. You know what happens to those that squawk, don't you? They get their squawkers broke.



Grandpa said something and was never seen again. He was the Jimmy Hoffa of the family. Being Irish, any ong drawn-out sound is assumed to be the wail of the banshee. There's another letter in the mail from some relative. They only write when, you know, a personalized obituary column. "Please, let's go to someplace more gay—where there's sound and light." Well we can go to where there's sound but I can't promise any light.

Out of certain black holes in the ground come moans. There's one in Vallecito, in northern California, called the 'Moaning Cavern'. I'm always tempted to call it Vaselino for obvious reasons. Like those albums that contain moans of pleasure or, for those less purist, moans of pleasure to a disco beat, a set of records capturing the sounds emitted by various caves around the country could be wickedly exciting. Crouched at shadow's edge, at a trinity of locations, emanations could be recorded and mixed that result in a most adventurous triangulation—a triangle with two right angles and an apex at infinity.

There's a Rocket that is lost out in the boundless velvet expanse of outer space. Its course is on a beeline for a black hole. I don't think it's ever going to come back home. Grandfather! Grandfather!

Imagining yourself far off in space it is possible to look back and examine yourself. That is what the ancients did when producing their mythologies of earth's construction. Float off—look back. The voice of God is the elemental gravel-voice of Patricia Neal. Conden-



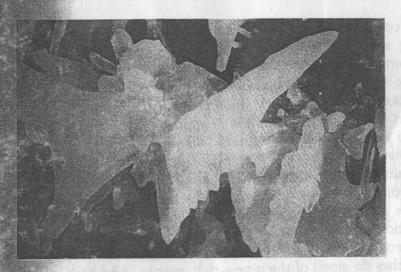
sing from unbounded extremes, it utters the command for things to form—for the mineral rain to fall and harden into reality. Look down from your perch, parrot, mimicker of the true voice, and drool over the donut on the plate. In this version of Earth's topography it is an immense lozenge, a Lifesaver, skirted by a waterfall that reduces Niagara Falls to atomic proportions. This water pulls away from itself over the edge and turns down into nothingness where it gasifies and returns, rises up and falls again in the form of rich mineral water. It hardens into a lush chemical landscape.

For those who distrust organic life—who feel more at home with the eternity of stone than with the transience of flesh, a chemical terrarium may be constructed to substitute the one normally containing plants. In an air-tight glass case certain combinations of substances are brought together, sculpted into a

PLATO'S CAVE ROTHKO'S CHAPEL LINCOLN'S PROFILE

Salt Gardens

MIKE KELLEY



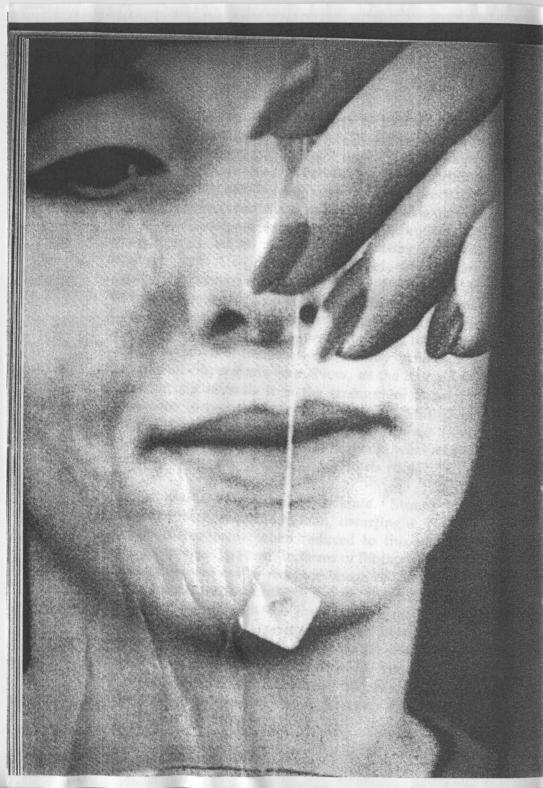
pondscape. Gasses circulate, so mineral rich that delicate fern-like structures start to accumulate, grow if you will. In a pool of sugar water you can watch the development of crystals more lovely than any aquatic flower. Silicates drip into strange mushroom shapes. Bluing soaked into lumps of coal causes astonishingly tropical vegetation to sprout forth.

The chemistry set experiments of youth uncover and totemize certain household products. Items once ignored now become central, their unknown purposes the seedbed of bizarre fantasies. Bluing is one of these substances—of what use is it? The only other blue bottle in the house contains medicine for irregularity. Rumor has it that bluing has something to do with the hair—but only the hair of old women. It is applied to the dead-white of grandmothers, perhaps to give it a metallic luster—the shimmering patina of the exoskeletons of flies. How appropriate that what applied

to coal, producing crystals, applied to the hair gives it the sheen of iron. I've heard of iron deficiencies in women, the gender not normally prone to descending into the mine. Coal black to chrome white. Cub scout neckerchief-ring carving skills are put to anthracite. A bust of Abraham Lincoln is produced. The beard and hair of this elder are dabbed with the bluing to spur growth. It is hoped that this application will not feminize him. Coal fire in his eyes-intoxicating history. I breathe through his lips the wisdom of the ages, sage smoke forced down the shaft of time. Symbiotic air, we circular breathe lost in simultaneous selfreflection, the maze of vapors. And yes, his elbow patches do smell of the pipe-rich, manly. And blue is the color of Superman's hair. Now, as the hair grows out in strong crystals it is the strength of Samson's mane. The longer the hair—the stronger. Still, dyed hair has the air of homosexuality about it, even when old men do it. Will this bust, like Samson, weaken and submit to being shorn again, back to its roots?

Vicious crystal—hypnotize, fascinate. Stone: that whose age transcends the human, dwarfing it. Nature worship makes sense when reduced to this—a mere lump. So compact a form. In terms of Biblical history a stone is the most easily accepted image of the creator. The air and water, created before the land, lack substance, and though the insubstantial qualities of those first two might seem to better illustrate the Creator, who intersects all things as air seeps into a closed room and water infiltrates a dry sponge, men are born idol-worshippers and need the physicality of a loving touch, as pointed out in Lorenz's experiments

with tactile pleasure in monkeys. Forget the Monkey Trial, the comparison is still apt, for the stone is a more Christian symbol. Isn't Christ God made material? The Rock—divinity coagulated.

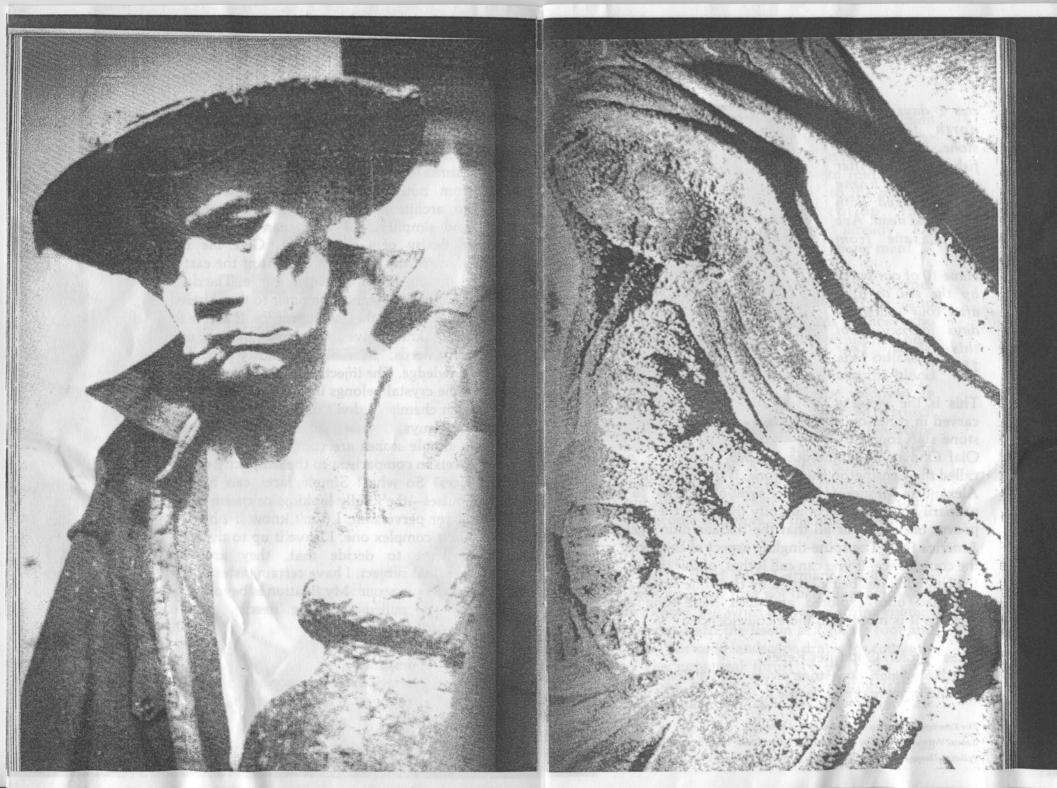


There is a New Age dawning—one more refined. This age harbors a special affection for crystals, holds them above the common stones. This preference is for the seemingly fabricated, the man-made. The crystal is removed from nature by its overt geometry, its similarity to architecture. It belongs more to the inalyzing and simplifying eye of man than to the organic complexity of God's world. Give me the pedestrian stone of the street not the salt of the earth. Give me the sinuous line and flowing curve. The days of aristocracy are over—take a hammer to the chiseled aquiline features, topple the cubist profiles. If I have to get down on my knees, give me a simple master, one loser to my needs. Mudlike regularity matches backyard knowledge. The injection-molded, space-age plasticity of the crystal belongs in the rarefied domain of the research chemist. I don't understand this. Fuck Ill you smart guys. I won't be confused by your hetoric. So simple stones are composed of complex iny mulitifacets in comparison to the simplicity of the rystal's faces? So what? Simple faces can harbor lemonic impulses—the kindly looking ice cream man, ust a veneer for perversion. I don't know if I have a imple face or a complex one. I leave it up to the staff of GO magazine to decide that, they are the astemakers on that subject. I have certain tastes of my own, certain tastes in stone. My fixation is beyond explanation. I am pulled like the needle of the

The Norwegian Lodestone.

ompass...toward what?

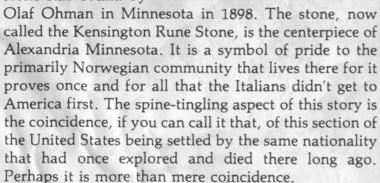
8 Goths and 22 Norwegians on exploration journey rom Vinland over the west. We had camp by 2 sker-



ries 1 days journey north from this stone. We were and fished 1 day. After we came home found 10 red with blood and dead. Ave Maria save from evil.

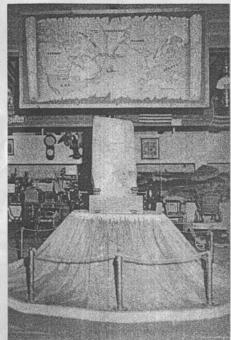
Have 10 of our party by the sea to look after our ships 14 days journey from this island. Year 1362."

This is the message carved in runes on a stone slab found by



Likes Attract/Opposites Repel.

The Norwegian Lodestone sends out its flesh-magnet ray and farmers come. People in this neck of the woods



don't ask the salmon struggling up the stream how it knows how to find its way back to the place of conception...they know already. Go west young man!

Landscape shapes the customs and morals of those who live within it. Those who are outcasts, who have the blood of the pioneer in them, leave to search out the landscape shaped to fit them

the way a key fits a lock. A very few others, strong, willful and creative, refuse to be torn from their roots, but still unhappy, mold their surroundings to suit them. They become sculptors of the environment.

Invasion U.S.A.

Bryce Canyon is filled with Germans—motorcycleriding leatherboys. How they got their bikes across the ocean I don't know. But when the will is strong enough even a wheel can learn the lesson of Christ's foot and walk on water. Tortured landscape draws the romantic soul to it. The unnatural thrust of the rocks gives credence to their perverted lusts. Creaking leather, candle in hand—roam the phallic landscape, illuminate those wells that at dawn seem to illuminate themselves. The sound of the crows in this valley is the far-off echo of the marching band in the stadium.

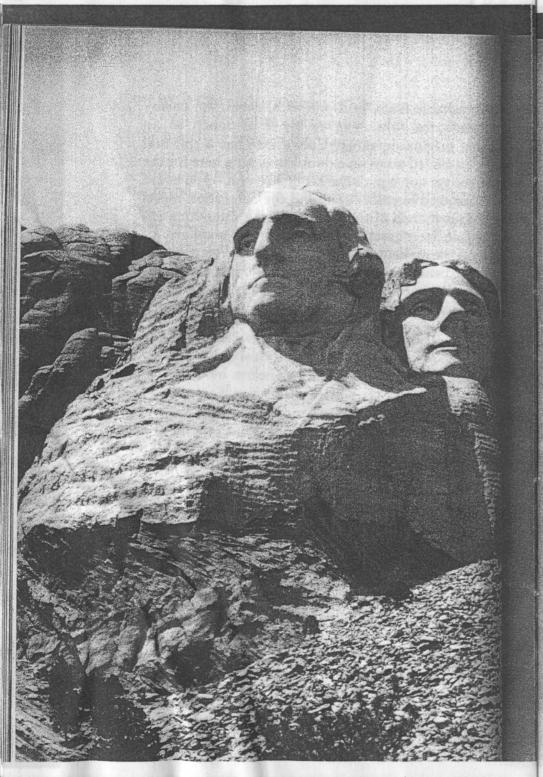
Pillar of Strength/Pillar of Salt.

Back home, back in time, back in uniform. The upsidedown phallus, the stalactite, is not far in form from the twisted cross. G-E-R-M-A-N in U-S-A spells E-V-I-L. The Nazi war cave. Nature, even in your deepest, most hidden and barren, recesses you are defiled. The Teutonic war ax lies buried in the Cave of the Ice Giants. Metal in frozen flesh, exoskeleton under duress protects the armorer. The biker spelunking crew calls out, "Yoo-Hoo, Swiss Miss!" Huh? "Yodel on this bro'." Yodel along with the sound of Mercury dripping from the vaulted arches of the new industrial gothic. The new water-music pitter-patters the names of the old blood gods. In rhythm: Ymir, Ymir, Ymir-he whose body was the compost heap used to sprout the Earth. If I were a matchmaker, I'd set him up with Lot's wife, but what they have in common precludes it—when they turn to stone they die. Reversely, some stones turn human to live. It tastes good to run your tongue over the salt-sweaty body. Not the dead one though.

The Holocaust of Stone.

If the deep feminine voice is of gravel, that stone is hidden, and smartly so for it is commonplace. Those with no special characteristics are singled out, stripped and mined—deep the throat, jackhammer, a rape, reduced to democratic dust. If you desire to save yourself you must unite yourself with the attacker, become un-

distinguishable from, and one with, them. An enemy who joins the fold is loved twice as much as an untested original member. Conversion has a spiritual ring to it. Saved takes on a double meaning here for the act of conversion equals the act of survival—you could call it protective coloration, and the coloration meets the high demands of the designer. Like something enshrined in a museum, it becomes the standard of beauty—the makeup job that on the model pictures the height of health and naturalism. Without it she seems anemic. Assume the mantle of humanity. Act out the pathetic fallacy—the imitation of life.



Idealized Portraiture.

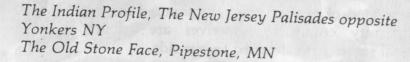
The stern granite jaw of Washington was retrieved from the rubble. Touched by the hand of man it attains lasting importance. Other stones have never had to submit to this touch. They have fashioned themselves into man's face using the mimic abilities, the artistry, of nature. The natural cathedral of the cave and the 'Old Man of the Mountain' are forever safe from the jaws of the bulldozer. There is even one rock that has taken on the features of Richard Nixon. Though the man has been politically disgraced, the stone draws respect. Actors who portray the most vile criminals get the same kind of respect, they are admired for their craft. Crafty criminals themselves are admired. Traitorial stones have defected to our side.



Petoskey Stone, the State Stone of Michigan (above)
George Washington, Mt. Rushmore, S.D. (opposite)







The Old Man of the Dalles, The Dalles of the St. Croix, MN

The Old Man of the Mountains, Franconia Notch, NH

The last of the faces in the previous list is by far the most famous stone face of all. It is the state symbol of New Hampshire. Truly, then, a spy that has infiltrated well, the countenance embodies the very heart of the population surrounding it.

The state stone of Michigan: Petosky Stone. It is the petrified remains of coral. Once alive, now Midastouched. Poor boy pick up your gown and walk. You have been chosen. Lowly thing, this is your transformation. Petrification is transcendence. Rise up out of the masses. Michigan's Million Dollar Lottery—the

The Indian Profile, the New Jersey Palisades (left)
The Old Stone Face, Pipestone, Minn. (right)





state chooses and bestows its favors. The coral which became the state stone, like the ceremonial mummy, has greater prominence in death than it did in life. Never in its wildest dreams did it ever think it would rise from the ranks of the reef, leave the colonies behind, and be shaped, polished and studied for its own qualities alone. The big winner has won over death, has become the seal of state and power, the apotheosis of "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" philosophy. Put the boot to the mob that marches together under the red banner. Refuse to be part of the mass undifferentiated.

In Living Breathing Stone.

A monument has been constructed, a colossal heroic head composed of an amalgamation of fossilized Trilobites. Ancient of days-everlasting. The ossified slugs have joined together to create something greater than themselves. Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country. No

prize is forthcoming. You don't empty your pockets to pay yourself. The head of charcoal doesn't wish to powder away in the production of the portrait sketch just as the drawing itself doesn't wish to be wiped away in improvement—but they do so anyway. If I wipe away a charcoal drawing of Lincoln it can be read metaphorically as representing his death. That is the problem with drawings as well as with people—they are transient. Not so with stone. No need to sculpt the cave, it is already permanently fashioned. In statues we look for the resemblance to men, but in discourse we look for that which transcends the merely human.

The gun carved in soap does not fire yet it does its job. Melodrama—the cheaply cast figurine of interpersonal dynamics.

Soap opera.

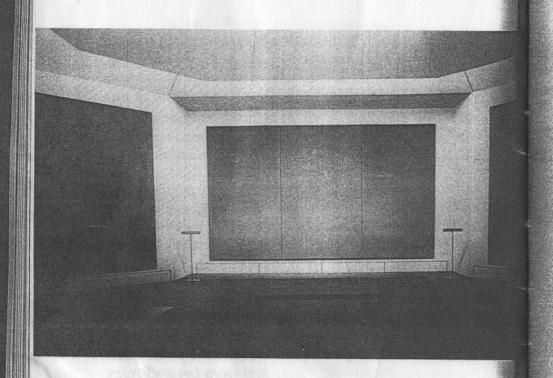
Soap stone does not stand up to repeated handlings, it must be used quickly.

The imitation of life should be molded of permanent materials.

The diamond is the hardest stone known to man.

The family jewels: the testicles.

Family life; sit 'round the big round table at my house. A blessed event is dawning.



Bittersweet. Sometimes the joy of one occasion is tempered by a simultaneous one less happy, as when the miracle of birth is darkened by imperfect development. Some products before they leave the factory are already tainted and do not stand up under the test. Roebling below his bridge, setting the foundation for the structure, bent under the pressure—thus was born the bends. Perfect geometry is twisted and torn, folded at the horizontal axis. He who stood tall tilts at the waist, face toward the floor. A four-sided room, bent like this becomes six-sided and the more faceted, the more complex, the weaker. The strong man needs less of everything—less water, less food, less love, but...less legs? Legless wonder-paraplegic octagon, eight minus two don't cut it. Baptistries are always eight-sided and when one falls short so does the infant. The test is of water. Submerge and hold, now count—up to eight. Now all the fingers and toes. Are they all there? All ten above and below? Bubbles swirl madly in celebratory champagne. Break the bottle on the new thing. This carbonation is in the blood. Viewed through water, all things are distorted-how can you tell if what is seen is correct or not? Do it on faith. This is a chapel; it has eight sides—believe me.

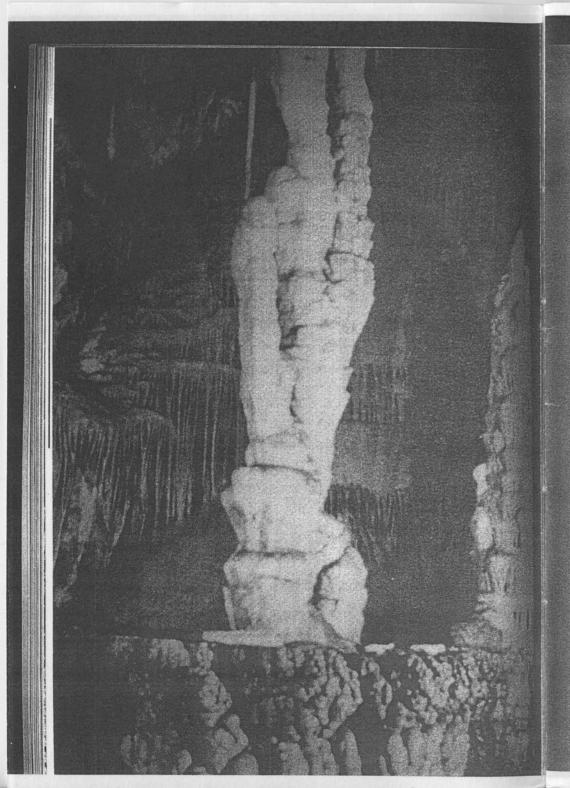
In the symbology of numbers eight is the number of regeneration, that is why baptistries are so constructed. This meaning is derived from the fact that it took seven days to create the universe. Thus, the eighth day can be construed as beginning another cycle. Now, that without legs, the paraplegic octagon, is associated with the sixth day. That is the day that work was actually completed, so it symbolizes the

cessation of movement. But just because you're damaged doesn't mean you can get away with laying dormant. Look at all the energy generated in a wheelchair basketball game. Lazy brat! Get up and walk!

You are just an imperfect shadow of a single perfect idea befouled by matter, dirtied and made inconsistant by the clumsiness of matter—brutish matter. The soul of the child, perfect, resides in a star but, subject to the sweet tooth, it is temptable, is drawn to the flesh. The grass which is greener browns to the leathery weight of physical baggage. Young soul/old bag, it doesn't matter.

hey all there? All ten above and below? Bubbles swind hadly in celebratory champagne, Break the bottle or he new thing. This carbonation is in the blood. Viewed through water, all things are distorted—how can out if what is seen is correct or not? Do it or tailful is a chapel; it has eight sides—below water.

In the symbology of numbers eight, is the nu cost of egeneration, that is why haptistries are so continueted. This meaning is derived from a fact that sook seven days to create the universe. Thus, digith day can be construed as beginning another of the Now, that without legs, the paragraphs octage.



"Please. Help me with these bags. They are SO heavy.
The weight is more than I can stand."

Well! If you weren't so spoiled, if you'd ever had to carry even your own weight, you wouldn't bitch so much. So pure-so pampered, I hate stars. Get your diamond-studded hands into the fracas for a change. Pick up your bag and get moving. Once the hand is full the callus forms, on the mind too. The power of the subconscious works the sensitive outer layer into the massive hammer of the type seen in headache commercials; it says, "All is forgotten." Plenty of the upper crust ignore their lessons and are drawn to the pimp of low-life. But once the grinder is put to the nose, time buffs off the sheen. Recollection dims of the highest leafage on the family tree. Just plain folk now-no regrets. There lies a shadow of previous heights, rarely present. You need blinders. The glare of diamonds is intense, even in deja-vu. Things need to be deadened, the foot must fall in its prescribed step. Not fate-free will is here somewhere. Is the aged debutante in her flophouse bed at home? Is she representative of someone making good choices? They say she is touched-and not by the hand of fate either. Princess! Do you believe me that any minute now the servant is going to walk through the door? Yes, the servant...but not the one you expect. The servant of the people it will be ... to throw you out in the street.

I'm getting up out of bed now. Any minute.

I am hitting the street before it hits me in the face. Any minute.

I am picking my bags up and moving now. Am building a little arm and leg muscle now. Am making my way down and picking the turns myself now.

No back-seat-driver wanted today now.

We are loaded down enough without the mother-inlaw in the back now.

Oh! Mommy's little girl! Can't get left behind now. Princess fits on the tiara and it keeps squeezing and working the gray matter now.

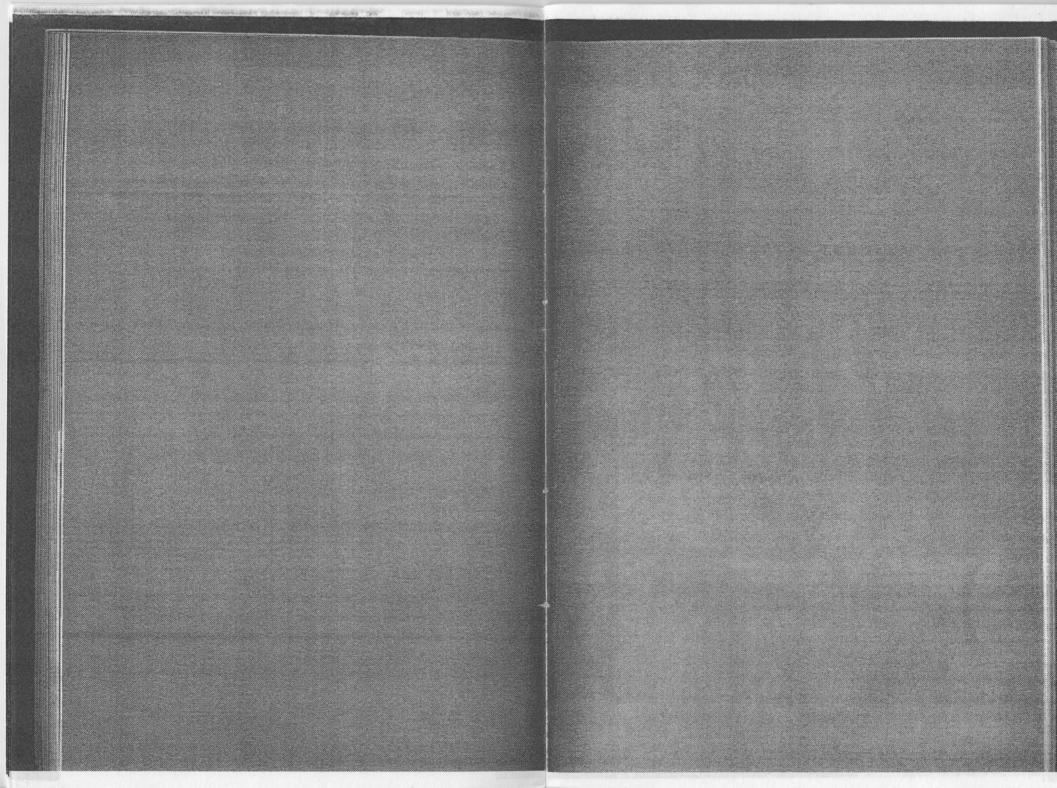
It squeezes to rise up to a point—the crowning jewel. OW!

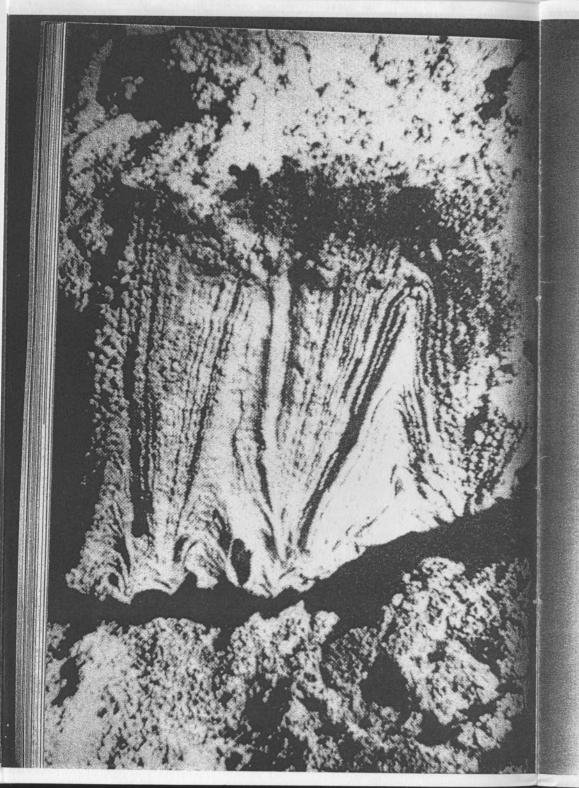
Forget it. That jewel isn't going to be reached today. You have to open your clenched fists and let the baggage drop first. Then the royalty you truly are can rise up—only then. Make the first real show of your desire. Make matter bend to your pleasure instead of waiting on others to serve you. Things come eventually, but be strong. Start to get those hands which have been occupied reoriented. All that has been forgotten can be relearned.

After the early exhilaration, the lost one regrets its explorative frame of mind, weeps with memories of the familial break. Toddling homeward with hands outstretched, it holds the strings ready to be retied. This is the last scene in the filming of the Prodigal Son's story. As the clapboard snaps the beginning of wrapup, all that came before ends. With this act, "Cut!" the lights dim.

Fire rise! Freedom! Seated before the hearth the fireside audience is in rapt attention. In the furnace/puppet theater dance the burning flame of passion. The

heavenly chords singe and separate from the director. Inflamed by the new found freedom sink amidst the lapping tongues. Offered the choice you will gladly resubmit to slavery. This is too intense. There are those who in captive chains sink under the weight, then there are those perverts who, fettered, raise their heads high in joy. Am I sorry for the perversions of my past? ... I'm sorry, please take me back!





The point of no return—when the bounds of love are stretched and can never retighten. Loose pussy-you have lost your allure. Disowned child—the hot sidewalk is your true home. The meager liquids you carry are not enough to quench your discomfort. The feces, blood, urine, and pus you exude will never snuff this damnation. You'd better cool the engine before the joy ride overheats. Free love? HAH! The free ride is ending. No one rides for free—gas, grass or ass. Dish it out. Pull in the driveway, now pull out. Well, young man, just pull out, turn around and go-like you should have done a long time ago. And young lady, if you come waltzing in that front door toting any extra front-baggage, you can just turn around and beat it. The door is thrown open. The arm is extended. pointing straight out. Trudging away, knee-deep in snow, wrapped only in a thin shawl, is the Winter scene/Summer lover. And never come back!

In Spring an old man's fancy turns. Speak to me a love poem. Call me "yours." But now, ownership is denied. Fall Semester, the fruit has fallen and is in decline. The hazing rituals have brought into initiation. The brothers sing this song:

"it flows that way it goes from left to right this learning display takes from dawn to night

the juice flowed from butt and out the brain we all bowed after shock, to start again it flows that way it goes from right to left at end of day by society are blest

and called upon throughout the seasons to recall "One Hundred Reasons"

"One Hundred Reasons" as you reap so shall you sow "One Hundred Reasons" that's all you need to know"

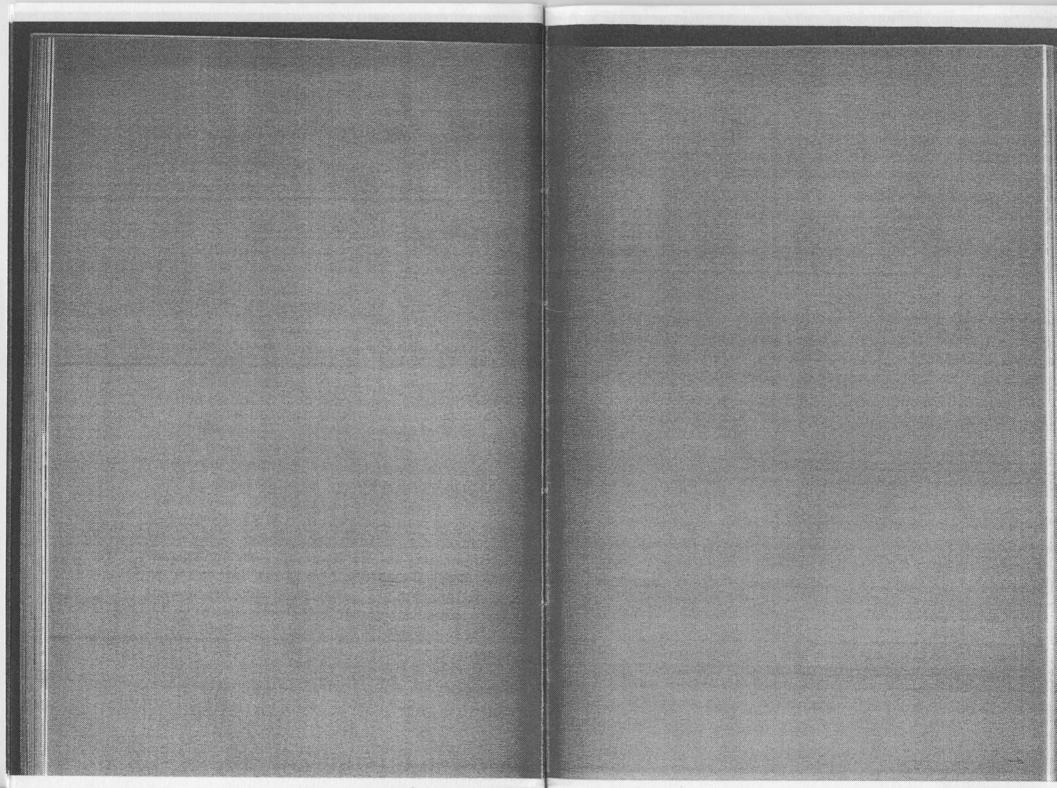
- 1) ATOM SMASHER
- 2) THE CHIROPRACTER
- 3) HOMEROOM SERVICE
- 4) THE REFORMER 5) MASHMASTER
- 6) REBEL YELL
- 7) SPINE TINGLER
- 8) TEACHER'S PET
- 9) THE SWINGER
- 10) JUST DESERTS
- 11) HISTRIONIC
- 12) FLANK PLANK
- 13) MIND BENDER
- 14) BRUISE BLOOMER
- 15) RED-EYE EXPRESS
- 16) NERVE WRACKER
- 17) WOOD-CRAFT
- 18) PIMPLE FLATTENER
- 19) "TRAUMA"
- 20) THE BUN WARMER
- 21) MANNER HAMMER
- 22) RED HANDED
- 23) THE WHIZZER 24) CRY BABY
- 25) THE CHEAP **PSYCHOLOGIST**
- 26) "THAT SMARTS"
- 27) THE WILL KILLER

- 28) ARM OF THE LAW
- 29) THE LEVELER
- 30) JOY STICK
- 31) TARDY TO PROMPT
- 32) THE WAKER-UPPER
- 33) ABOUT-FACE
- 34) FANNY TANNER
- 35) SWEAT SPRAYER 36) DEEP IMPRESSION
- 37) HOODLUM HEALER
- 38) TEAR-WARE
- 39) BONE CRUSHER
- 40) THE TENDERIZER
- 41) THE PROBLEM SOLVER
- 42) WHITE KNUCKLER
- 43) WONDER WORKER
- 44) "WISE YOU UP"
- 45) RIGHT-REBEL
- 46) THE SILENCER 47) MEAT BEATER
- 48) THE PERSONAL TREATMENT
- 49) LESSON LEVER
- 50) THE RECTIFIER
- 51) LET-ER-RIP
- 52) WOODEN PLATE SPECIAL
- 53) MOMMY DEAREST
- 54) LOW SLUNG
- 55) BOTTOM DWELLER

- 56) BLIND JUSTICE
- 57) THE SOCIAL WORKER
- 58) LEATHER FACE
- 59) IT HURTS ME MORE
- 60) PIECE FOR RESISTANCE
- 61) PRIMAL SCREAMER 62) WHIPLASH
- 63) GREEK STREAKER
- 64) I DIDN'T DO IT 65) HAM SLAMMER
- 66) PALM-AID
- 67) THE TEAR JERKER
- 68) PEDALOG
- 69) ELECTRO-SHOCK
- 70) BRAT BAT
- 71) BACK-FIRE
- 72) PURPLE HAZER
- 73) TEMPER-A-TANTRUM
- 74) IMPRESSIONABLE
- 75) REAR ADVANCE
- 76) THE DISCIPLANE
- 77) UP AND AT EM 78) TWAIN MEETER

- 79) BEAT-IT
- 80) WHISTLING DIXIE
- 81) EMILY'S POST
- 82) THE SWAT BEAM
- 83) BACK SEAT DRIVER
- 84) THE ALERTER
- 85) FRAT FLATTENER
- 86) REAR ROLFER
- 87) 'SMOKIN'
- 88) DADDY'S LITTLE HELPER
- 89) ASS-ART
- 90) RED SPREADER
- 91) SUDDEN INFLUENCE
- 92) HOT SEAT
- 93) THE HOWLER
- 94) WARMWOOD
- 95) THE BOARD OF **EDUCATION**
- 96) FLAT CAT
- 97) MOONMATE
- 98) CITY SWITCH
- 99) VA-VA-VOOM
- 100) BACKBURNER

Now I am a member of a new clan...if only seasonally. The trees, too, toss off and reclaim their leaves annually. Dad denies my dependency in Autumn so I can get financial aid, then reinstates me in the family in Summer. An unspeakable arrangement-very secret. Those above must never know, it is a secret between just you and me. His grammar is denied the use of the possesive during Summer custody so the lingering affair is illegal, incestuous. Now is the time to hit the road, let the cat out of the bag and on to a hot tin roof. Lolita and her foster father leave for vacation early, far from the prying eyes of neighbors. It's a serious offence to take a minor across state lines, so he and his prelegal Coalminer's Daughter must tunnel across. Now he can carry her across the threshold. Never on a Sunday.

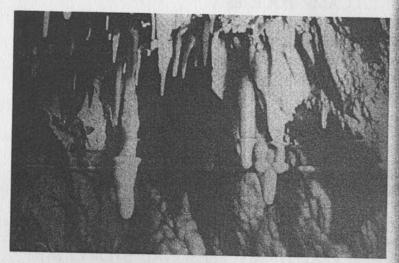


## YOUTH CAMP TOUR '86

Tonight's feature: another preadolescent sex comedy. The reels are as mixed-up as our understanding of things. We don't know what goes where. All us guys put our cocks into the bottom of popcorn cartons. All us girls want a hot dog and a bag of marbles. Quiet! Watch the movie. "Oh, this is the best part, the climax... No, wait, this is the best part." If only everyone could only like the same scene the best at the same time. Simultaneous orgasm. The world as one. Up, up with people.

"This is my life," a cheap pornographic novel taken directly off the shelf and read verbatim. "THE FIRST TIME REVEALED. MY PERSONAL STORY. MY SECRET LIFE." My autobiography is autosexuality.

"Wow! This is the best part!" Hopping out of the popper in excitement. Whoops. The popcorn seeds have evacuated-what a mess, an ever-widening stain. I speak to the multitude. "All my children-get back in your box!" But they do not behave, ignore my commands. I am used up. Authority figures here at Camp P.O.W. Ow are in bad shape. In these kinds of films we always play the straight man for cruel juvenile pranks. Here comes the camp chaplain. The frontal notch in his priest's collar represents the pulled sweet tooth, the gap, the doorway to maturity. Painful loss—cruel dentistry, not all of his marbles. Pearly whites they were. Pow ow! The Japs pulled all the teeth out of his head at P.O.W. camp except for his front two so he would look more like themselves. Camp mascot—the beaver. Codename—Bucky.



Slant eyes, buck teeth, "So sorry, so sorry, so sorry." That's what the Jap says every time he pumps another torpedo into Popeye. When I screw my eyes shut and hang my front teeth over my bottom lip it becomes the facial expression of intense concentration. I am trying to picture something, draw it up from my mental data bank. Maybe I'm trying to recall and relish a childhood fantasy, maybe I'm reliving a trauma from long long ago. "Let's get dressed for our first day of school." They've reissued G.I. Joe too. I just want to get nostalgic, go back to happy days as depicted in a dream; or maybe a nightmare...

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
TEETH FALL OUT
SHIT IN THE PANTS I FORGOT TO PUT ON
Loss and its mental equivalent, forgetfulness, seem to
dominate nightmares.

Yes, what distinguishes the child from the man is that

the sweettooth has been pulled. Face the bitter truth, the time has come to go to work, to make your own living. There is no more easy money under the pillow. The tooth fairy visits no more. Drop the 'tooth' from 'tooth fairy' and you're just left with 'fairy.' Do a mincing dance around the campfire. Everyone is homesick at Camp P.O.W. Ow.



I'm free .. free .. free!"

Off come the underpants. I swing my purse and dress in the wind. Yea—so what? So I'm one of those guys that likes to play with dolls. What of it? I share...Listen to this ...

We walk together We understand Our bodies Our selves

We

Our

We

Our

In the wee small hours...

A feminine voice...

We are pure, unblemished by the world. We are surrounded by a force-field of natural purity. We ebb and flow with the rivers. We are the daughters of the moon. We are the missing links. The tensed welded chain can relax now-go limp. We are here to break the chains that bind. Our lips softly open and breathe the sinking of ships. We snap the weakest link gently. The new Lincoln floats in...hands, lily-white and delicate—lips, rosy...soft. "I sleep with soldiers to take the war out of them." Line up the Confederacy-the Southern train is going to be pulled. I'm going to free the slaves. I'm freeing them right now with the passivity of my actions.

I'm freeing you. And I'm doing it through freeing myself. I'm going to take my pants off now...and lay it right on the line. It doesn't matter if it's a ruler. I am no

longer ashamed, for all the rulers have been dethroned. We are all now weakest links. No more scapegoats. The whole fucking net's been weaved of Judases. And Judas, don't reject me now—now when I am in my weakest position, when I am most exposed, most free.

sunded by a force-field of natural purity. We obb and ow with the rivers. We are the daughters of the toon. We are the missing links. The tensed welded as can relax now—go limp. We are here to break it chains that bind. Our lips softly open and breather einking of stops. We snap the weakest link gently be new Lincoln floats in hands, lily-white and elicate—lips, rosy, soft. I sleep with soldiers to take the war out of them. Line up the Confederacy—the outlern train is going to be pulled. I'm going to free as slaves. I'm freeing them right now with the mestirity of my actions.

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An ominous cloud spreads and covers the horizon darkening the sky. This is the cinematic cue that evil is descending on bleak house. Father stands at the camp gates. He signals to come hither. "Walk through the portal, son—leave paradise behind. Vacation is over. The time has come once again to take up the responsibility of family chores." I pick up the Easter basket and head for the coops.

Some eggs have been retrieved from the nest. It's a case of Phoenix-reversal where the proud bird sinks into fetal position and hides among the embers. You can't get away so easily you little scamp. Daddy knows that running away from home is just a signal for more parental attention. Things don't slip away as easily as that. Property doesn't just get up and walk away—not unless it's sold. the titles are exclusive, copyrighted. Just try and wrench them from my grasp. The long arm of the law loops around—no loopholes.

"HOW CAN I SELL MY PAINTINGS? THEY ARE MY CHILDREN. I CANNOT SEND THEM AWAY."

FIRE SALE. FIRE SALE. FIRE SALE.

Smoke damage has made an Al Jolson of the merchandise, masked its true nationality, made it obscure. Make it more obscure. Everything must go. The starving artist's sale—low, low prices. My very soul is up on the auction block. Now, like the actor, I embrace another's personality. Personality for a price, that is the actor's role.

Take it to the stage.

The stage mother is staging things, "You stand there, and you stand there. Speak my child, now be silent my child. Let's stage a honeymoon pageant: you get on top and you get on the bottom. I want to know where you are at all times you rascal. I don't want it to go to a new home unless I know it's really appreciated. I really don't think that's the kind of place you should be going. Is that the kind of dress you should be wearing?"

"Mother, please—I'd rather do it myself!"

If the titler is owner—I spit in its face. The word that flowed from its mouth and became me, congeals in my mouth into a wad and is flung back. I disavow ownership and take on a stage name...

Samantha Fox Gypsy Lee Amber Lynn Chelsea Manchester Annie Sprinkle Misty Dawn Suzie Nero Rikki Harte Gayle Sterling Desiree Lane Mona Page Danica Rae Cheri LeBlanc Sharon Kane Bunny Blue Scarlett Reddy Blair Castle Jade Wong Pia Snow Jasmine DuBay Cara Lott Martina Panzer Joanna Storm Lisa DeLeeuw Hyapatia Lee

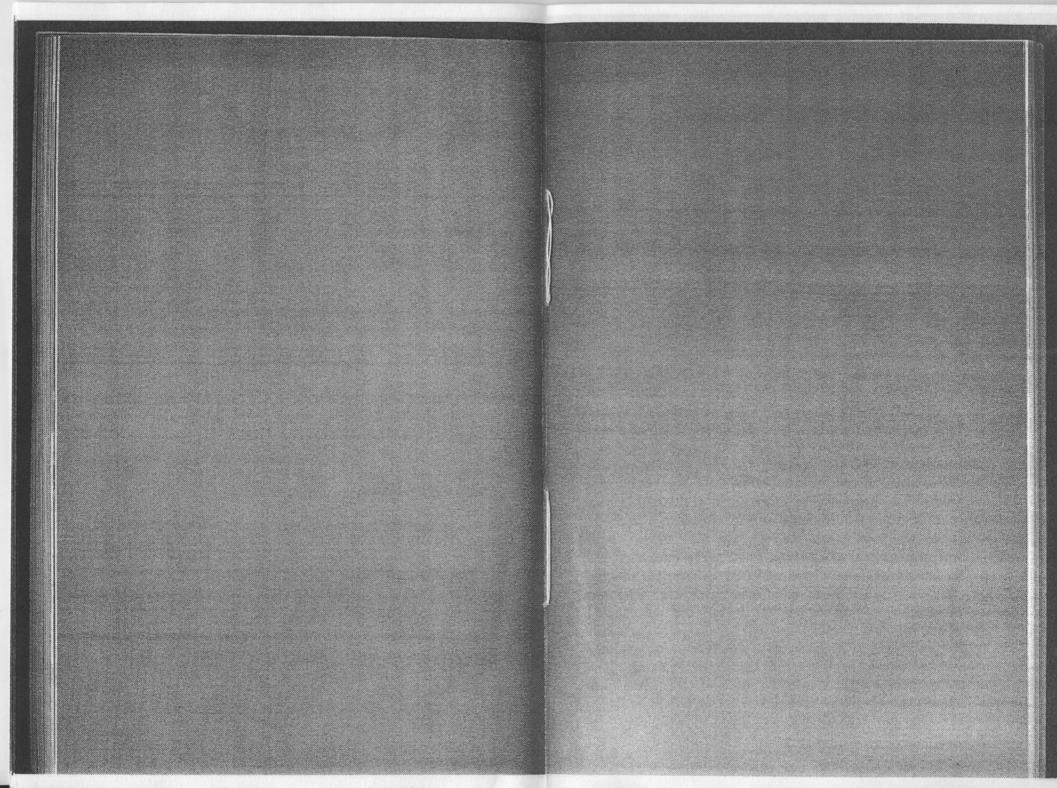
Captain Beefheart Johnny Rotten Iggy Pop Darby Crash Nikky Sixx Boy George Alice Cooper King Pleasure Tiny Tim John Doe Sky Saxon Dee Dee Ramone Prince Eek A. Mouse Sun Ra Madonna Howling Wolf Jello Biafra John Denver Dean Martin Ringo Starr Johnny Thunders Billy Idol Bo Diddley Al Jolson

Turkey Little Man Popeye Limpy Toothless Junebug Mr. Lion Eggplant Lil' Rimhead Fat Rat Fester Ace Capone Cosmo Big Foot Moonman T-Bone Mad Dog Peanuts Worm Shotgun Sputnik Loco Joe Baboon Angel Kong

Tony Curtis Marilyn Monroe Mr. T Rock Hudson Charles Bronson Cary Grant Kirk Douglas John Garfield Jeff Chandler Tab Hunter Hedy Lamarr Martin Sheen Doris Day John Wayne George Burns Mamie Van Doren Veronica Lake Red Buttons Jayne Mansfield Bozo Joan Crawford Charlton Heston Jerry Lewis Shelley Winters Boris Karloff

Once the name given you by society has been tossed off the leash that binds you to it is severed. Porn queen I am—free now—free free free—to perform what once were socially unacceptable acts. Look, peoples held in bodage by your flimsy codes of etiquette—I ejaculate on you while in the throes of my sex dance.

The new name is necessarily antiauthoritarian. I say—I am me, the historyless construct. I am the rebel who chooses his name from a list of choices. I speak in a personal glossolalia that is interpreted by an appointed spokesperson. The free form cacophony of my babble has been scripted. What is this voice? Who is speaking? Huh? Where do I live?





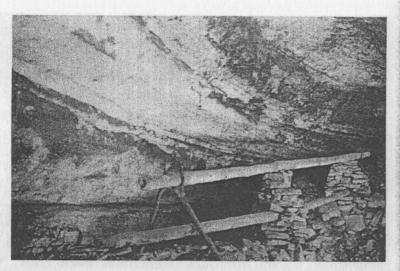
The true philosopher, once freed, realizes his commitment and puts himself into the service of society.

"They must ascend until they arrive at the good; but when they have ascended and seen enough we must not allow them to do as they do now... I mean that they remain in the upper world; but this must not be allowed; they must be made to descend again among the prisoners of the den."

Down it goes—seeping, low. That is the path of the troglodyte. The pain, the pleasure of exploration; when spelunking sometimes you have to stoop, sometimes go on all fours, sometimes even crawl. CRAWL WORM!

Sink into the accordion of cracks, the light baffle. Light stands at the threshold, tensed, waiting to descend and possibly dissipate. It is the hovering tier of dense atmospheric color, already close to darkness, a lambent color that seems to generate the primal energies of natural light. It is at the brink of a resonant void from which any palpable form is banned.

The trajectory of light in Plato's Cave is subject to the tunnel's distortions, its twists and turns, its turning in on itself. It compresses, the cave of archetypes. Though in the bottom of a pit and shrouded in darkness, there are no lies here. The chameleon needs light and color to enable it to conform, to hide itself, to lie. In the richness of mud things cannot be changed for they are what they are. There is justice here—no mistaken identities, no wrong trips to the electric chair.



The last mile is walked by those who know their way well and need no illuminated signs. Too late for pseudonyms and hideouts. In the pit-you are there.

Just as it is difficult for light to get in so it cannot escape. The inner light finds its correlate in sound. The blast from the interior might find its way to the mouth if it follows the string laid out. Hear the resonance though dimly, the call for help, but how can it be traced reverberated as it is and the string only a line of evaporating drool? Listening to the call as it exits, the point of origin can only be set by this maxim...AS BELOW/SO ABOVE. That which is heard is an exact reflection of the call. As hearer I prove the caller—he stands just as I stand. He is there. He is found at the bottom of the pit. The tragic affirmation.

Yes yes.

The chorus of agreement testifies to the sorry nature of the story being told.

I agree. So it is. Name it like it is. off by the machine, which inflates and defla It is that. It is so placed and designated. Truth is in the name. Two are inseparable. The correspondence has transcended analogy. It is living simile. Word has been made flesh.

### SO BELOW/AS ABOVE

Explosion at the top. The upper echelon. At the top, because of the intricacies of the levels and the complicated nature of the laws of checks and balances, it is difficult to pinpoint one source of power. What would be called president is left unnamed. The name of oneness is used to refer to a wormlike mass too tightly wound to be unsnarled. The decision comes down to the workers in the cave. They are all individuals, that is why they are here-because they are easy to spot, and once spotted, are set back to their tasks. Down comes the final decision. It follows a path that the commoners will never have access to. It appears from nowhere and is unquestioned. troubs baselow I hours am evil Hollmon am

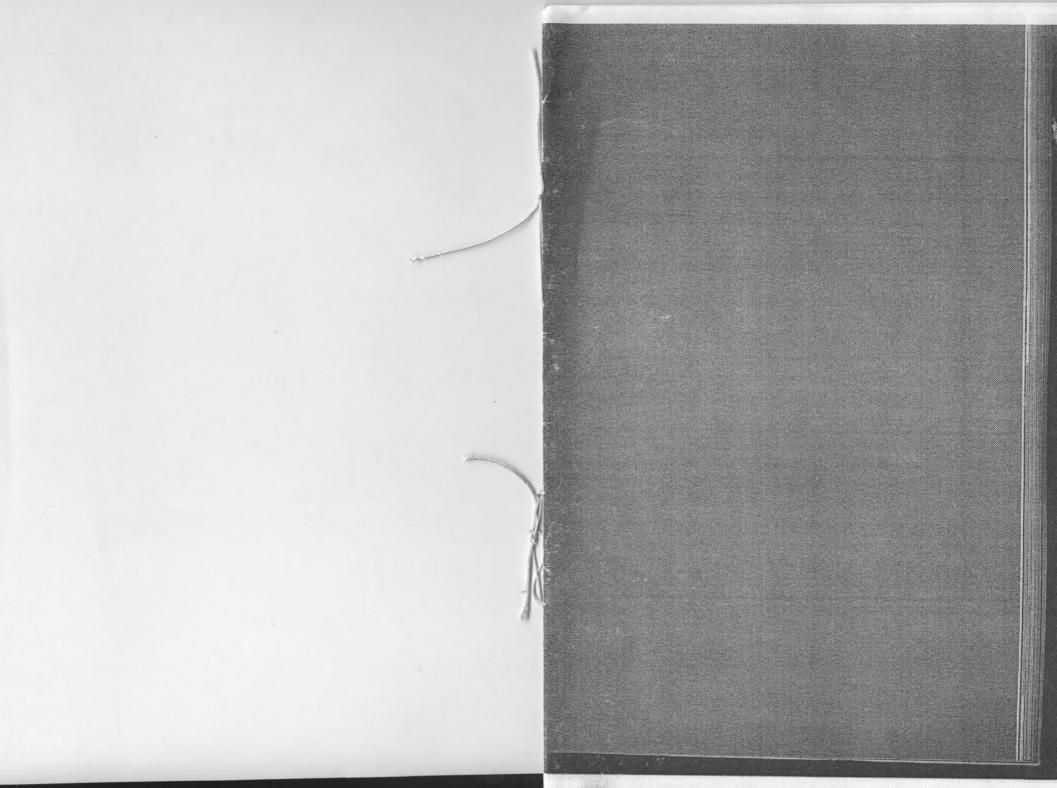
Explosion from the bottom.

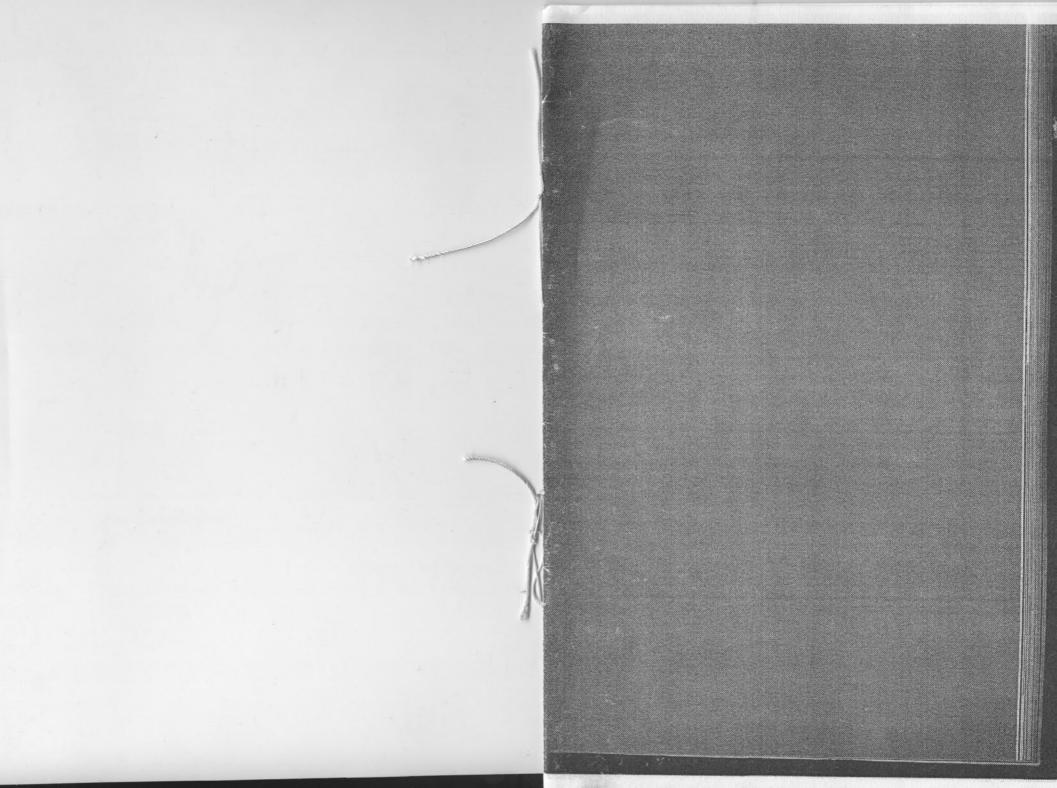
Down in the guano mine sometimes a natural gunpowder forms in the droppings. Enclosed as it is within the confines of the cave, if the gasses are ignited a terrible explosion occurs. In any enclosed societal structure, no matter what its shape, even a pyramidal one, an explosion at the bottom necessarily has ramifica-

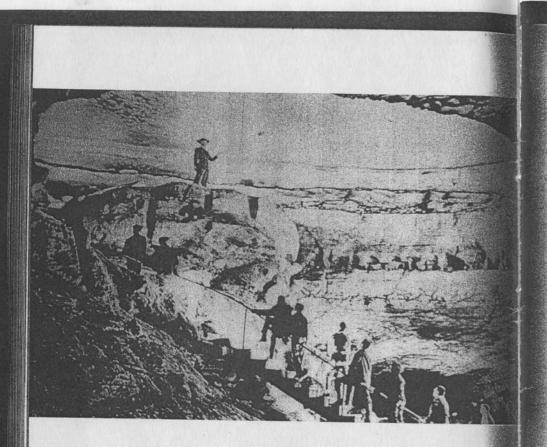
tions at the top. An old cartoon comes to mind where a duck, posing as a doctor in a hospital, becomes trapped in an iron lung. His internal balance is thrown off by the machine, which inflates and deflates him like a balloon. When he escapes from it his body, which was equally distributed, maintains itself now by sudden shifts of weight. A hand will expand while another part of the body dwindles, and so it goes, moving randomly, one part of the body expanding while another part contracts. The moral implications of this story are exhibited in another story also concerned with the dangerous build up of pressure. In this tale some pig farmers conspire to falsely win a contest by increasing the size and weight of their animal by knocking a cork in its ass. The hog gets fatter and fatter, the farmers are sure of their success, then—their dream ends in an explosion and a storm of shit.

These stories are not meant as parables in defense of the abolition of upper and lower, for in contrast is dynamics. Anyone who has been to the farm can testify to the importance of a pecking order. Can you imagine a society of equal chickens? In equality there is the loss of the impetus to act. The birds sit in line immobile, an unmoving and monotonous queue. Give me conflict! Give me action! Two-fisted action! As above/so below, the middle exacts the toll. Wring him dry. Yes, in pigs the head and feet are of little worth but in man they are of the highest value—the two points with which the line is drawn. In between—no man's land.

Get rid of the middle man, abolish the use of unnecessary intermediate actions. Mom is tired of playing the slave. Why must she endure the empty ritual of spooning food from pot to dish and carrying it to the table where it is again transfered to plate? Let everyone gather together as a family and eat directly off the stove. Smash the plates and dishes, burn the books on etiquette, it's time to topple some idols. Take a good thing when it comes and quit trying to reciprocate. Those who arrive from the West bear a welcome gift of oranges but when the Easterners return the visit who wants the bushel of corncobs they bring with them?



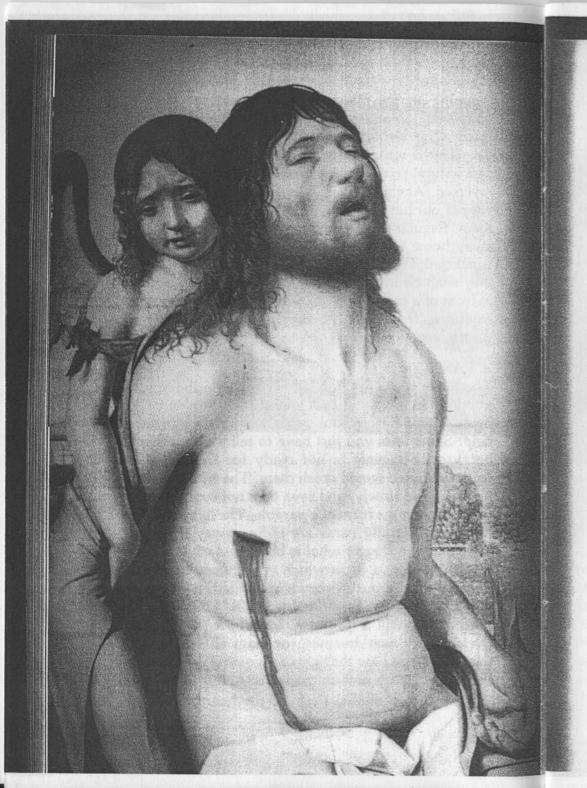




Stepping off the plane they are now in an alien environment, in an area where nothing really concerns them. The wrong vegetables are served at dinner because the wrong ones are harvested in these parts. The natural setting is unnatural—the table settings are reversed. At this time of year, normally, other things are put out but put out here and now frost would take them. Regular habits have been so stretched from far away home turf that only a few thin strands remain connected. Like Turkish Taffy, in this unseasonal cold, they snap clean. No longing, no desire—trapped now in front of a crowd of strangers they must approximate emotions, fool the audience, and in turn fool themselves.

#### A PASSION PLAY

The poor audience has so little understanding of goodness that even when it is being helped it thinks it is being tortured. Poor soul, relax, we really are trying to help. Sometimes you just have to tell a little white lie because the listener is not ready for the truth—the truth undiluted would crush them. The truth has to be parcelled out slowly, and even then not straight. It has to be given in the form of a parable. The lights are dimming and worldly cares are fading away. Everyone knows that in theater what is being looked at is really something else, a lie in which you choose to believe. Even all the sex in this play is simulated, it's only dry humping. The most memorable line is "I'll just put the head in, honey. I promise, I promise, I promise." Dream away, wet-dreamer, for that's all you're going to get. Because now the lights are coming up and when the lights are on nothing happens. Action stops. Clinical light exposes flesh as flesh and the dream fades away.



Take it to the stage.

Let it all hang out; corporeality is truth. Strut your stuff on down the burlesque ramp into the very heart of the mob. Can't you feel all the energy pouring at you—all the love? Strip it all away. We don't mind the little flaws; we choose to call them beauty marks. We pulse sympathetically like heartbeats in unison. Pure body excitation—freed from mind's confusion. "Lord, if I can experience it just once more I'll never ask again." Don't worry, when the lights go down again you can see it over and over, to your heart's content. This reel has the talent to be backwound as many times as pleasure can be felt; right back to opening credits.

After opening credits there is a knock at the door—he is the vacuum cleaner salesman. She comes to the door, she wears perfume. Everyone knows what happens next; the plot is predictable but reassuring. We want recognizable and good things to happen repeatedly. We want to be able to expect them. Why, it's so real you can smell the perfume. This is synesthetic theater. It encompasses all the emotions, all the senses, all the colors, all the smells. One thing worries me though—I've heard that olfactory hallucinations are one of the first signs of schizophrenia. My gaze shifts to examine my peripheral vision—is anything going on there which shouldn't be? My gaze shifts from front and center to the side.

The theater of the side cave.

In this "sichtungzeit," this period of shifting and searching, attention tends to focus on things previously unnoticed, things peripheral, off to the side. But once noticed, all faith that was before dissipated focuses and grows strong again in this new spot.

"Oh ho—I've found you now. And what glances I send you now that I am one spirit with you and you one body with me and one soul. You treasure of the side, you mad little thing, I devour you like food and drink to fulfilment, am mad with love, out of my mind."

Little wonder bees, little wonder divers, little wonder worms, little fish of the bleeding wound—dive in and play. Every hole is sacred. Everything that was dark and hidden is now discovered and this is cause for joy. Every depression in the topographical map has been pinpointed, every puncture is the subject of a separate psalm, every scratch, every cut, says "follow me down." Let's get our hands into it like Doubting Thomases. Back to the roots.

An after-Lent body painting party.

After abstinence—a celebration. Sling the blood around; we are painting posters. I grind the brush into the paper until a hole is formed. We are painting posters and cutting banners out of felt. Sister Mary Corita is our model and we are so glad because she has finally left the convent. She is doing nondenominational work, now we all have access to the joy of her images. The United States government itself has just issued a stamp with her design on it. It says "LOVE" in the dribbling paint of populism. A 22 cent manifesto on the separation of church and state has just been released. Oh happy day—the philatelists have been waiting for this.

Yes, just as there are annual editions, just as old things go and new things come, there is a succession. After the sobriety of Lent comes the gaiety of Easter and across from purple on the color wheel is vellow. There is a figurine with a clock in its stomach. What was a cheap knick knack is now an expensive antique. What was a white elephant is now a



yellow bunny. The somber purple of dusk is metamorphosing into the hopeful yellow of dawn. The sun is risen. Raise the banner high...

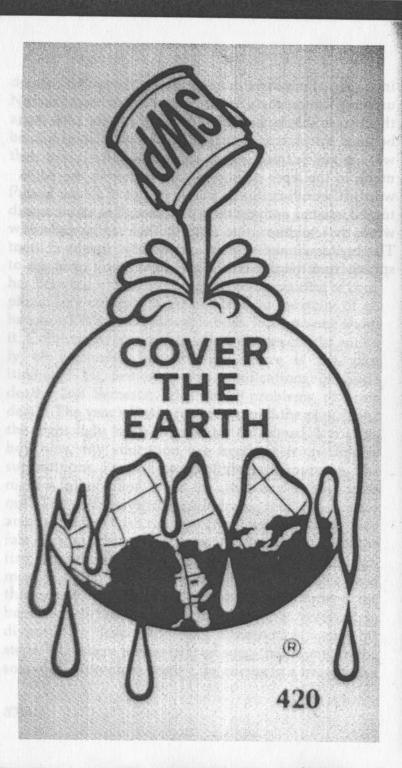
## LENT FINGERS LINT FILLED CUT FELT—OH FEEL IT

Feelings. Glowing angels or pulsing crotches? Ecstasy accompanies the act of creation, especially when the canvas is the human body. Sexuality is heightened, there is a feeling of floating above. "I feel divine," shift the point of view from that of the actor to that of the audience, from subjective to objective. The actor pictures himself as avatar floating among golden mists. Those seated see hogs mating in a mud pit. Are the

descending flower petals only a barrage of garbage? Not an insult—far from it; those watching the display are so taken with the reality of the depiction that they believe they are rewarding the animal performers with their favorite food. What a show—call the SPCA.

Purple across from yellow on the color wheel. The audience stares at the mirror of itself on the pedestal. The white light of the footlights generates a successive contrast. Feel the pulse, the excitement flow from the one to the other. But it is difficult to feel truly that which has been felt too many times. Is not the pairing of complimentary colors a tactic overused to the point of exhaustion? When something is open to all no one wants it. Come to the free school where classes consist entirely of Freshman Existentialism. Here is the class itinerary: 1st Semester, the ramifications of God's death; 2nd Semester, the moral problems of brain death. The year's final project is to pull the plug. Yank the night light from the socket. Go ahead, I'm a big boy now, my education has freed me from childish superstitions. I'm not scared of the dark anymore. The night is full of color. Open the closet and let the corpse out. The stiffness of this melodrama seems to call for actors afflicted with rigor mortis. They are so dry they fart dust, the debate ellicits yawns. In discussion of the first semester's topic, God's death, the counterargument is stated that God is that which separates dead things from live things and that since inert matter is the basis for all life thus it itself is actively involved in divinity. If a dead man walks, something is fueling his steps. Isn't there a bear-shaped soap that laying in the soap dish grows fur, doesn't the corpse in a trough sink

into jelly, aren't there living growing plants that mimic unliving stones, there's meat jelly, there's head cheese, there are edible fungi. The soap sinks to jelly in its dish because it was contaminated by the very microbes it was used to cleanse away. It suffers the same fate as the monk in the leper colony, as the doctor in the AIDS ward. It would really be poetic justice if all the hosts turned around and ate their parasites. The day comes when the children must support their aging parents. The bread winner is stale and moldy. Bright colors sprout from the dry crust. The night is full of magic.



# SPRING'S REPAINTING IS HERALDED BY THE RAINBOW ARISING FROM APRIL'S DRIZZLE

The image on the paint can label depicts our planet under a deluge of pigment-"Cover the Earth." Drowning in color, a stifling aesthetic death. Some of the denizens of this orb are employed to distinguish between smells and colors. The sad fact is that those who relish these positions cannot get them because they lack the proper social skills needed to procure them. It's so infuriating that they can't get the job they want when someone else who isn't even particularly interested in it has taken their place. Those who would, like the priest, work out of commitment, for free, are reduced to jealous voyeurism. What a sad state of affairs, when the work force is so divided, when people are held back from that which they love while others are paid for work they care nothing about. They just sit and wait until the hour when they can go home and throw themselves into their hobbies. Everyone wishes Sunday projects were eternal and the other six days of the week truly do seem that way-endless hours of numbing activity where more planning goes into how less can be done rather than more. All products have become shabby and it is considered a skill to be able to distinguish between different levels of things ill made, to develop a hierarchy of kitsch. The differences are minor but the gamesmanship of the activity is interesting. The skill is an interior one, one of taste, a series of mental chess plays the exterior manifestation of which is unimportant. In fact, the world surrounding this mindset is left to fall into a heap, to dress itself in the most garish throwaways to be found in the

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thrift store. The gymnastics of style transform into beauty the oddballs and outcasts who flaunt this plumage. The only important decoration is interior—call in the interior decorator.

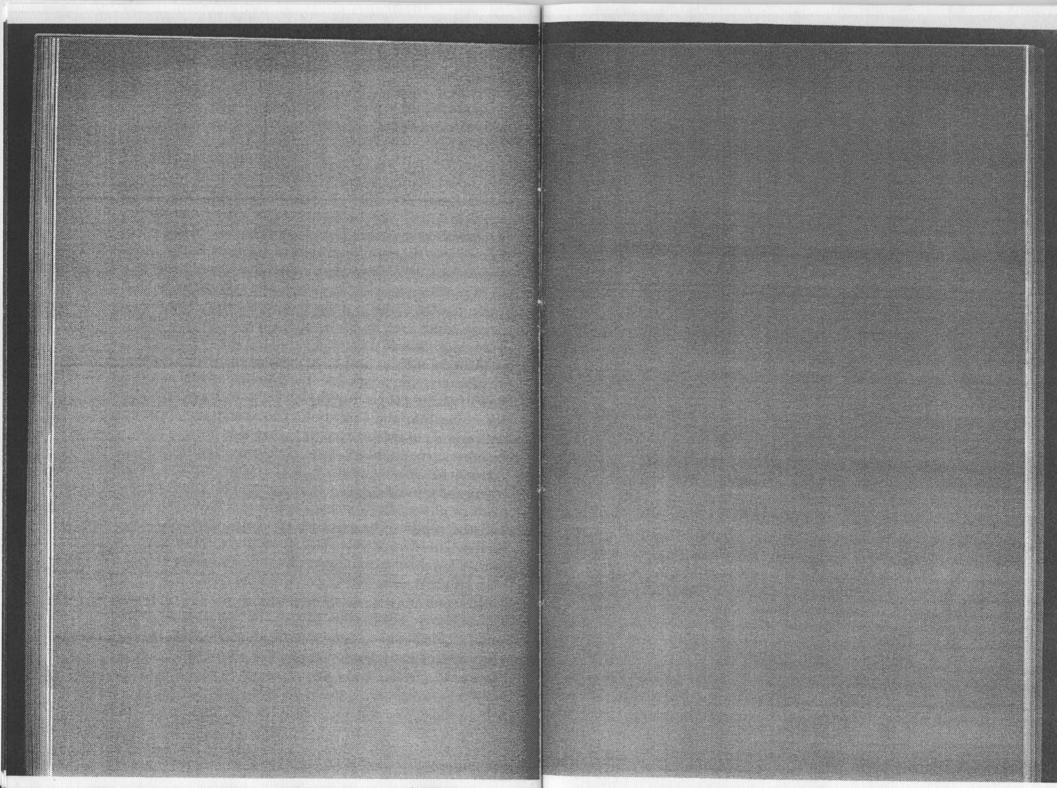
He points his finger toward the area which must be repainted. The mood ring perched on his digit exhibits the furiously shifting hues that match the violence of his emotional swings. All true revolutionaries know that change does not come gracefully, but often only follows the forceful hand. With apologies to Gandhi, take hold of the white light and feed it into the meatgrinder of the prism, fracture it into color, then shackle it into a rainbow coalition. The color wheel becomes the wheel of fire—the wheel of destruction. In this circle the primacy of one color over another ends—the gears grind to a halt.

In the cave is the lowest foundation; here lie the irreducible themes. The only white light found here is in the form of a small stunted albino bird—the Blind Cave Pecker, Woody Peckerwoodpecker. He too can be run through the prism, the vampire who drains the enclosed color and leaves a thing doubly paled. Ritually bled, the river of fluids runs off into tributaries of primal pigmentation. The family of man is united in these substances. No, I may not live in Harlem, I may not live in Watts, but I eat of the same white bread, the "Wonder" bread that is bread reduced to its lowest and simplist form—congealed wheat paste. This is the bleached glue which I sniff for my homogenized and safe glue high. I draw on the same white paper. I'm high on life. Jonathan Livingston Peckerwoodpecker

has landed on the roof of my house and built a nest made of threads culled from the coat of many colors.

The humors, pulsing through the channels of the body, have taken up the initiative themselves to institute a test divorce, to drive a wedge between married specificities, to eject the colors out of archetypal time into temporal time. Modern urges are pushing toward a looser and more fluid attitude about how things are categorized. It has long been noted that certain colors are of certain times, and decades have even come to be known by the name of their dominant color. The profiles of those eras lie under those filters, prey to the prominant style of theatrical paint and lighting, ringed by those false halos and mistakenly weighted by those chiaroscuros. Someone has their finger on the scale. Now it is the purple Rothkoian light of tragedy that has come into the forefront. The shade of Christ's bruises are constant no matter what skin tone acts as their background. Black Jesus, Red Jesus, Yellow Jesus, White Jesus all lie together in the same melting pot where fatty purple cooks to the top. This plum field painting of vital fluid darkens in hue as it flutters down into the depths. The rainbow of death: Green Kryptonite, Gold Kryptonite, Red Kryptonite, Blue Kryptonite, Jewel Kryptonite exert no influence here at the edge of night.

Down down down, this tint is the initiator of my mind's fall into the shaft of memory. The storybook chronicle of the past opens up, my life passes before my eyes.



Remembrances of Camp P.O.W. Ow!

My dearest brother,

Camped out in rural gothic, we are surrounded by what we take to be the sound of people fucking but it's only the grunts of fighting bears. In the woods we stumble upon a ring of entrails around a skull, mirrored by another ring of soil surrounding a mound, something freshly buried. The trees move, pushed by the wind, point toward a landscape so mundane it must have been the scene of an incredible atrocity. There's no other explanation for the disquieting energy emanating from the place. Off in the distance barns can be seen burning. This scene has the feeling of a film, a film where the camera pans too much, where there are too many lap disolves.

Day One

We collect decay, bottles of algaed water containing stillwater fish, bottom feeders, garbage fish, sticklebacks, gar pikes with sores around their mouths.

Day Two

We examine structures of unpainted slatwood held together with wire, aged and splitting. We find a stump that's flaking away, falling into powder. It's held together by shelf fungi acting as barrel bands. Everything has the smell of the bottled wood from chemistry sets—wormwood? Rotting cardboard boxes filled with porno magazines in a flooded basement. Octagonal chunks of tile pulled up from the sidewalk. Paint has bubbled in the sun and chipped off.

Day Three

In the overgrown backyard are mason jars of black potting soil crowded to the brim with sprouts; the inside is sweaty, wax paper is between the jar and lid. In a shallow fish pond lies a carp—not enough water to move. The hippo is in its storage tank at the zoo; concrete is damp and cool. We take a trip through the sewer that empties into the river and lose our shoes in the muck, they get pulled right off your feet. We dig into the dirt, it has passed through the worms so many times there is no grit left to it. We dig up a ceramic frog, the kind that sits in a flower pot or birdbath. We skim the film off the pond. We pull the wax paper from the jars and let the smells out: wet dirt, wet dog, uncleaned aquarium.

### Day Four

We find some grubs under a newspaper. They are wet and white with dry powder sticking to them. Dust on the tongue. You can feel the moisture being sucked out.

### Day Five

Down in the root cellar is a collection of home-canned goods.

They've all gone bad. The jelly has oozed up around the disk of wax poured in to seal the jar. No one put any baking soda in the refrigerator to take the smells away. Someone put eggs in a wet iron skillet. I have the taste of metal in my mouth. We mix sulfur with candle wax—that makes a smell like rotting eggs. We mix vinegar with baking soda in a plastic rocket and blow a hole through a window. It sails out into the yard and is

lost in the ivy. We run a hose down into the ground. The high-powered nozzle digs straight down into the ground, all twenty feet of it has gone down and it won't come back out. Compared to the tiny insects that live in the dirt that is the distance from the Earth to the Moon. The nozzle is like a rocket going past.

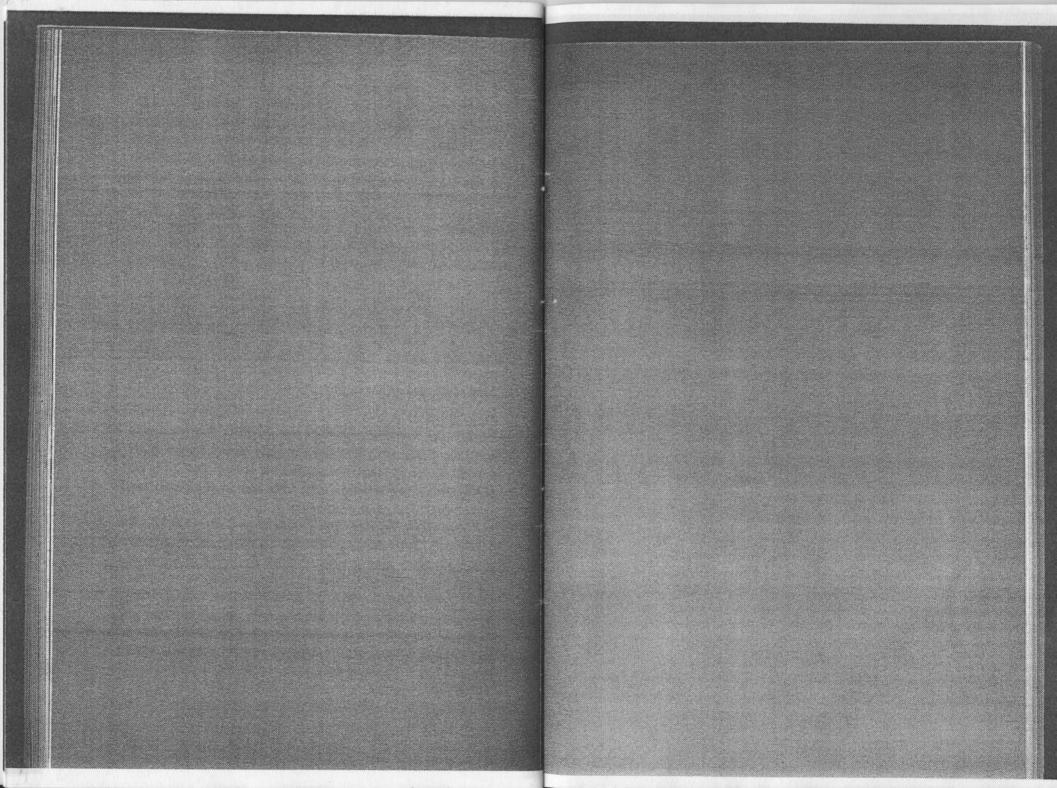
Day Six

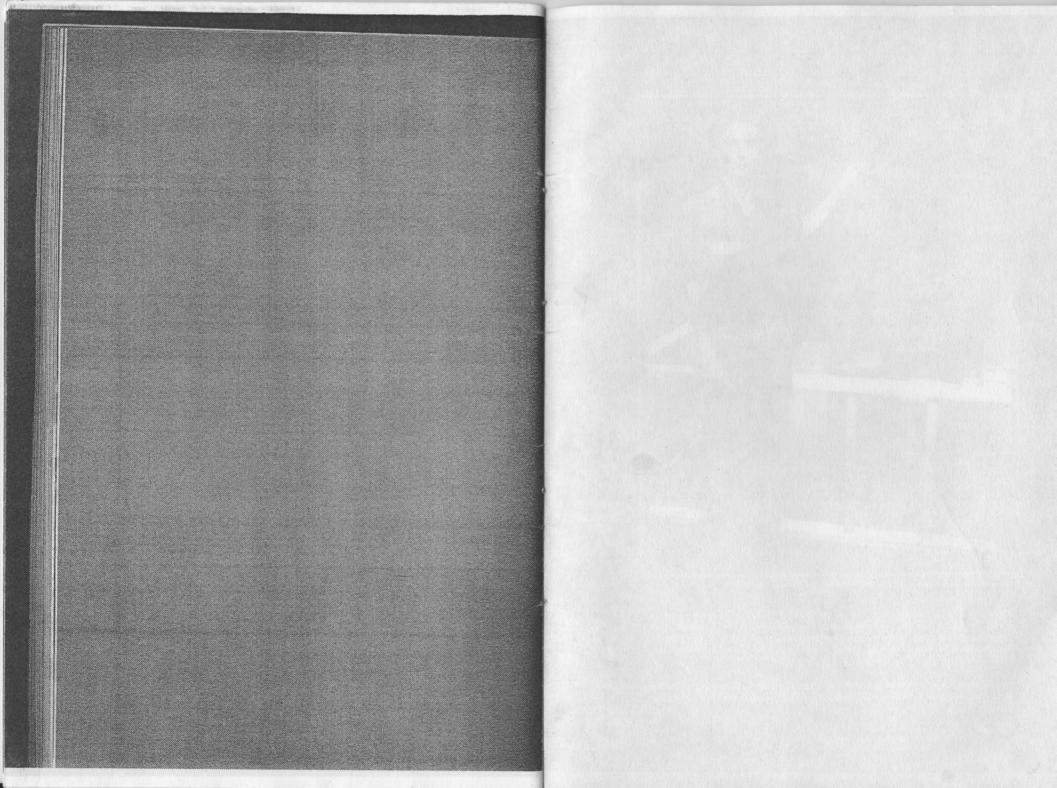
At night we light fires behind garages, during the day we crowd into the ventilator duct under the funeral home, explore an elevator shaft, a parking structure, sleep in a refrigerator box, and knock in the roof of a septic tank with big rocks. We find an egg in a fallen nest and break it open. On the yellow yoke is a redgray spot. That means the yolk is going to be a bird, the spot is its eye or something. It was going to be a bird, but not anymore.

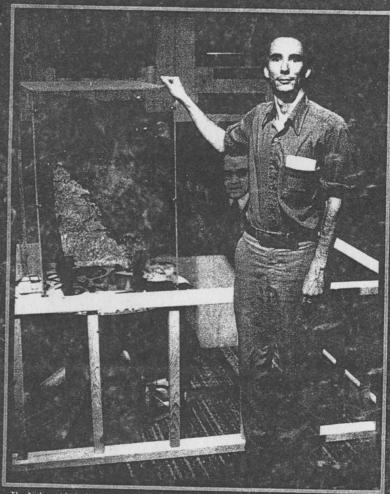
Day Seven

Today we dig. We dig the hose up out of the ground, tunnels, pit traps. We like to bury time capsules and watch the grubs we dig up shrivel in the sun. We put the hose on the wrong end of the vacuum cleaner and spray dust. We do an experiment in a big pot with boiling jars of tomatoes. All the jars split and the water turns red. We take all the bottles of perfume off the dressing table and all the bottles out of the medicine cabinet and mix them all together in the sink. We mix every color and smell in the world. We make a smell so intense no more smells can go into it. We bury them all real deep. Up comes a penny, Abraham Lincoln's profile tarnished. It's from a year way before I was born.

Sincerely, Mike







The Author with the Kensington Runestone, Alexandria, Minnesota, 1982

"8 Goths and 22 Norwegians on exploration journey from Vinland over the west. We had camp by 2 skerries 1 days journey north from this stone. We were and fished 1 day. After we came home found 10 red with blood and dead. Ave Maria save from evil. Have 10 of our party by the sea to look after our ships 14 days journey from this island. Year 1362."

People in this neck of the woods don't ask the salmon struggling up the stream how it knows how to find its way back to the place of conception...they know already. Go west young man!